

PRABUDDHA BHARATA

or AWAKENED INDIA

A monthly journal of the Ramakrishna Order
started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896



September 2018
*Commemorating 125 years
of Swami Vivekananda's Chicago Addresses*

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THE ROAD TO WISDOM

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON *How to Control Prana*

Prana means force—all that is manifesting itself as movement or possible movement, force, or attraction. Electricity, magnetism, all the movements in the body [and] mind, are various manifestations of one thing called Prana. The mind ought to control every bit of Prana of the body, [but] with most of us it is the other way. It is the body mastering the mind. We have becomes bodies. Here [comes] the philosopher to show us the way out, to teach us what we really are. You may reason it out and understand it intellectually, but there is a long way between intellectual understanding and the practical realization of it. Between the plan of the building and the building itself there is quite a long distance. Therefore there must be various methods [to reach the goal of religion]. A little physical help will make the mind comfortable. What would be more rational than to have the mind itself accomplish the thing. But it cannot. The physical help is necessary for most of us. The system of Raja-Yoga is to utilise these physical helps, to make use of the powers and forces in the body to produce certain mental states, to make the mind stronger and stronger until it regains its lost empire. By sheer force of will if anyone can attain to that, so much the better. But most of us cannot, so we will use physical means, and help the will on its way. The whole universe is a tremendous case of unity in variety. There is only one mass of mind. Different [states] of that mind have different names. [They are]



different little whirlpools in this ocean of mind. Matter cannot be said to cause force nor [can] force [be] the cause of matter. There must be a third [factor], and that third something is the mind. You cannot produce the universe from matter, neither from force. Mind is something [which is] neither force nor matter, yet begetting force and matter all the time. In the long run, mind is begetting all force, and that is what is meant by the universal mind, the sum total of all minds. Everyone is creating, and [in] the sum total of all these creations you have the universe—unity in diversity. It is one and it is many at the same time. The Personal God is only the sum total of all, and yet it is an individual by itself, just as you are the individual body of which each cell is an individual part itself. Everything that has motion is included in Prana or force. [It is] this Prana which is moving the stars, sun, moon; Prana is gravitation. All forces of nature, therefore, must be created by the universal mind. Control of this Prana that is working everything, control of this Prana in the body, is called Pranayama.

From *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*,
(Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2016), 1.487-90.

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Doctors and Assisting Staff Required for a Himalayan Hospital

Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati

- Situated in one of the most picturesque spots of the Himalayas at a height of about 6400 feet, the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati was founded by the disciples of Swami Vivekananda in 1899, at his inspiration.
- It is a branch centre of Ramakrishna Math, Belur, West Bengal, near Kolkata.
- The centre has been entrusted with the publication and propagation of Ramakrishna Vivekananda and Vedanta literature.
- The editorial office of *Prabuddha Bharata*, a monthly English journal started in 1896, is located here.



Mayavati Charitable Hospital

Apart from being a monastery and publication centre which was sanctified by the visit of Swami Vivekananda, this Ashrama runs a hospital called **Mayavati Charitable Hospital**. It made its humble beginning as a small dispensary way back in 1903 in response to the pressing needs of the neighbouring villages where live some of the **poorest people of our country**. Patients come here from distant places across hills and dales covering even a distance of 50 kms or more. Their helplessness at the time of sickness is really heart-rending.



We have been running a 25-bed hospital with outpatients' department in this remote place since **1943**.

Different types of treatment are done here entirely **free of charges**. Moreover, we arrange surgical, dental, urological, eye camps etc. throughout the year. Special health awareness camps are also conducted in many villages of the Kumaon region. Qualified doctors from different parts of India regularly visit our Charitable Hospital to conduct such medical camps. To cope with the steady rise in the number of patients, a five-storeyed building was built fitted with a few high quality diagnostic appliances. For this hospital, we need the following residential staff:

1. Medical Officer: MD or MBBS
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Saturday, 17th November 2018

Ceremony Period : 16th, 17th and 18th November 2018

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We value your help and co-operation immensely.

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Yours in the service of the Lord,

Vishnupadananda

(Swami Vishnupadananda)

Secretary



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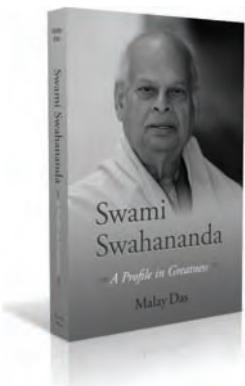


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SWAMI SWAHANANDA

A Profile in Greatness

by Dr. Malay Das



Pages: 234 | Price: ₹ 80
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The spiritual head of the Vedanta Society of Southern California for thirty-six years, Swami Swahananda, a direct disciple of Swami Vijnanananda, worked ceaselessly to spread Sri Ramakrishna's message. He established seventeen centers and sub-centers throughout the United States and has left the Ramakrishna movement in the West a rich legacy.

In this intimate, loving portrait, Dr. Malay Das presents Swami Swahananda as he knew him during the last seventeen years of the swami's life. We witness the guru's compassionate care for devotees and disciples, his ability to love with detachment, and his dignity and grace during his final illness.

Written in a simple, lucid and entertaining style, this spiritual biography will inspire sincere spiritual seekers from all traditions and offer them a glimpse into the wonderful life and work of this great monk and spiritual leader.



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उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत् प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the goal is reached!

Maitrayaniya Upanishad

September 2018
Vol. 123, No. 9

मैत्रायणीयोपनिषद्

तथा तत्प्रयोगकल्पः प्राणायामः प्रत्याहारो ध्यानं धारणा तर्कः समाधिः षडङ्गा इत्युच्यते योगः । अनेन
यदा पश्यन् पश्यति रुक्मवर्णं कर्तारमीशं पुरुषं ब्रह्मयोनिम् । तदा विद्वान् पुण्यपापे विहाय परेऽव्यये
सर्वमेकीकरोत्येवं ह्याह ।

यथा पर्वतमादीसं नाश्रयन्ति मृगद्विजः ।
तद्वद्व्याविदो दोषा नाश्रयन्ति कदाचन ॥

॥ ६.१८ ॥

*Tatha tat-prayoga-kalpah pranayamah pratyaharo dhyanam dharana tarkah samadhibh shadanga
ityuchyate yogah. Anena yada pashyan pashyati rukma-varnam kartaram-isham purusham
brahma-yonim. Tada vidvan punya-pape vihaya pare'vyaye sarvam-ekikaroty-evam hy-aha.
Yatha parvatam-adiptam nashrayanti mriga-dvijah.*

Tadvad-brahma-vido dosha nashrayanti kadachana.

(6.18)

This is the rule for achieving this oneness, control of the breath, withdrawal of the senses, meditation, concentration, contemplative inquiry, and absorption, this is said to be the six-fold yoga. When, by this yoga one beholds the gold-coloured maker, the lord, the person, the source of Brahma, then that wise person, shaking off good and evil, makes everything into one in the supreme and indestructible. For it has been said: 'As beasts and birds do not resort to a burning mountain, similarly no taint finds shelter in the knower of Brahman.' (6.18)

THIS MONTH

THE CORE THEMES of Swami Vivekananda's ideas in his Chicago Parliament of Religions' addresses and their relevance in today's context are discussed in **Swami Vivekananda's Addresses at the World's Parliament of Religions, 1893**.

Swami Vivekananda's struggle to participate in the World's Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893 and the response that his talks in the Parliament elicited have been presented with some new discoveries by Diane Marshall, graphic artist and art historian, Missouri, USA in **Swami Vivekananda: Breaking Big in Chicago and Some New Discoveries**.

Swamiji's addresses at the Chicago World's Parliament of Religions, 1893 have been analysed and their significance for the present-day have been dealt with by Swami Satyapriyananda, a former editor of *Prabuddha Bharata*, Rama-krishna Math, Belur Math, in **Swami Vivekananda's Chicago Addresses—An Analysis for the Present Time**.

The World's Parliament of Religions, 1893 at Chicago was recorded by many historians and has been analysed by many scholars since then to the present-day. Swami Narasimhananda, the editor of *Prabuddha Bharata*, traces such historical accounts and scholarly interventions in **Swami Vivekananda and the World's Parliament of Religions, 1893: New Perspectives**.

Arpita Mitra, an Associate Fellow at the Vivekananda International Foundation, New Delhi, examines the origin of the World's Parliament of Religions, 1893 and the tension between

the orthodox Christian groups and the more liberal Eastern religions in **The Dawn of Religious Pluralism?—The Importance of the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions at Chicago**.

Meditations on the Upanishads are the class notes on the Upanishads given on Wednesday evenings by Revered Swami Shraddhananda, former Minister-in-charge, Vedanta Society of Sacramento, in 1979. These class notes were taken down in shorthand in 1979 by Cleo aka Satyamayi Anderson and were transcribed many years later with the help of others. The notes are not verbatim and have been edited by Lali Maly and the sixth instalment is being given in **Meditation on the Upanishads**.

Many wonderful nuggets of wisdom contained in ancient scriptures are difficult to understand. In *Balabodha*, such ancient wisdom is made easy. This month's topic is **Danam**. Understanding this popular word is necessary to understand its meaning.

The gift of food is a meritorious act of charity and produces great results. This is explored in the first instalment of the story **The Glory of the Gift of Food**. This story is this month's *Traditional Tales* and has been translated from the Tamil book *Arulneri Kathaigal*.

Geoff Mulgan, chief executive, Nesta, UK's National Endowment for Science, Technology, and the Arts; and senior visiting scholar at Harvard University's Ash Centre, has written the book **Big Mind: How Collective Intelligence Can Change Our World**. From this book, we bring you this month's *Manana*.

Swami Vivekananda's Addresses at the World's Parliament of Religions, 1893

WE ARE NOW CELEBRATING the 125th anniversary of Swami Vivekananda's historic addresses at the World's Parliament of Religions held at Chicago in 1893. Here we will try to understand the core ideas of each of Swamiji's six addresses at the Parliament. We will try to explore whether these ideas are relevant today and we will also try to analyse the extent of their relevance.

The first and the most famous of Swamiji's addresses to the Parliament was his 'Response to Welcome' that began with the words, 'Sisters and brothers of America'. No other speaker at the Parliament gave the opening speech with this greeting. However, Swamiji's greeting was applauded not only because it contained the message of fraternity, not only because it gave precedence to women, whom Swamiji worshipped as manifestations of the Divine Mother, but because behind those words of greeting were the realisation and wisdom that all beings and all universe is one. Then, came his expression of gratitude that was connected to the tradition and heritage that he represented, that of an ancient Hindu monastic order. After this, Swamiji wasted no time and directly hit his core idea and also the core message of his master, Sri Ramakrishna, which was supposedly the core message of the Parliament also—the validity of all religions and faith-traditions. He explained how he belonged to both a nation and also a religion that did not persecute anyone but rather offered shelter to whoever came to them. Swamiji ended his first

address to the Parliament on a quite hopeful note that all will realise that they were all trying to reach the same goal, albeit by different paths. Even today, we do not seem to have understood this message. Everyone is adamant in proving one's faith-tradi-

India does not need religion, but education, healthcare, and enlightened citizenship.

tion or religion to be unique and the only valid path to God. The Muslim does not like the Hindu, the Hindu does not like the Muslim, the Christian hates all others, the Jew does not care about other world views, and the Buddhist does not want to accept any doctrine other than what she or he perceives as Buddhism. It is highly unlikely that the past masters or founders of any of these religions would recognise them as they are practised today.

Swamiji's second address at the Parliament, 'Why We Disagree', gives us reason enough to believe that the hopeful note with which he ended his first address was not met with much concurrence among the orthodox participants of the Parliament. In this address, Swamiji told a story about an interaction between a frog in a well with a frog that came to the well from the ocean. Swamiji urged us to go beyond obstacles, transcend boundaries, and try to interact with the faiths other than one's own and understand them. Doing so would enable us to not have pigeonholed thoughts and ideas about God and would help us live in harmony, even if there are countless ways to reach God.

In his third address at the Parliament, ‘Paper on Hinduism’, he described the age-old antiquity of his religion and explained that Hinduism is not based on any finite text, was not founded by any person, and that its basis are eternal laws that were experienced by rishis. He told that according to Hinduism the creation has no beginning or end. He said that the idea or sense of ‘I’ is eternal and that it is not the body or the mind, which are transitory, but beyond them and eternal in nature. He explained how tendencies are acquired from birth to birth and how these tendencies govern the nature of successive births. He explained that ignorance or the cause of the spirit becoming embodied is not known, that ignorance is nonetheless a fact, and it does not matter what caused ignorance but the goal is to know that our true nature is of the eternal and free spirit. Swamiji then denounced the idea of calling human beings as sinners, thus directly attacking the idea of sin in Judaeo-Abrahamic religions. He also critiqued the idea of loving God with an expectation and told how the ideal of Hinduism is to have selfless love for God. He said that the goal of spiritual or religious life in Hinduism is to become perfect and ultimately attain infinite bliss. He drew a parallel in science in that both science and religion are engaged in the search for unity. Swamiji told how Hinduism has many hues and colours of traditions and sects, only so that every person can practise religion according to one’s own inclination and choose one’s path to God, as per one’s tendencies. He quashed the idea that idolatry is bad as is believed generally by Western religions. Instead, Swamiji said that idolatry is helpful for the ordinary minds to understand higher ideas. He said that no one travels from error to truth but from lower truth to higher truth. Towards the end of this address, Swamiji said that a universal religion can only be one that has no specific

place or time and that will be infinite, and open to all. 125 years after Swamiji’s address, we are yet to find such a universal religion. Even if we cannot create such a universal religion, it is time that we do not meddle with the religious choices of a human being, that we allow every person on this earth to have one’s own conception of God.

The fourth address, ‘Religion Not the Crying Need of India’, is Swamiji’s quite direct way of telling the preachers of other religions, particularly Christians to not to teach religion to Indians. He said that India does not need religion but wealth. Even today, this is true to a great extent. India does not religion, but it needs development of society, good education, healthcare, nutritious food, security, and an enlightened citizenship.

In his fifth address, ‘Buddhism, the Fulfilment of Hinduism’, Swamiji showed how Buddhism is not very different from Hinduism. This he did, probably because, he saw an excessive harping on the uniqueness of Buddhism. This situation is the same even now, when the Buddhists and the Hindus revel in establishing their differences, instead of seeing their similarities. Swamiji cautioned that India’s downfall started when it segregated Buddhism from Hinduism.

In his sixth and final address, ‘Address at the Final Session’, Swamiji affirmed that the lesson learnt from the Parliament was that no one religion can claim itself to be the ultimate. The solution is not to get converted to some religion, leaving the religion one is born into. Rather, the solution lies in cultivating a peaceful and harmonious coexistence of numerous religions and faith-traditions. Swamiji pitied anyone who thinks that her or his religion will alone prevail. Now, after 125 years, we need to do some serious soul-searching and ask ourselves this question: ‘Do I believe there can be any number of paths to God?’ If we believe so, we will be saved; else we will be swallowed by hatred and destruction.



Swami Vivekananda: Breaking Big in Chicago and Some New Discoveries

Diane Marshall

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA came perilously close to not appearing at the opening ceremonies of the World's Parliament of Religions. He arrived in Chicago a month before the Parliament convened, and was crushed to discover that entries for delegates had closed. The 1914 biography by Swami Virajananda states that Swamiji was told at the Information Bureau of the Exposition that he lacked the 'proper references', and that he should have come as a representative of 'some recognized organization'.¹ Swamiji was too embarrassed by his own naiveté to press the matter. The shame of disappointing his friends in India was intense, but the World's Columbian Exposition required his immediate attention, and it proved an education by itself. It was as if this spectacular array of global

achievements had been laid out for his eidetic memory. After about ten days spent absorbing the sights at the Fair, his funds were nearly exhausted. He was not sure what to do next.

For part of his first sojourn in Chicago Swamiji was the guest of Erskine Mason Phelps.² Phelps was a socially prominent commercial leader and powerful backer of President Grover Cleveland. As one of the directors of the Fair, Phelps could have recommended Swamiji to the Parliament Advisory Council, but it seems that he did not comprehend Swamiji's vocation or purpose.³ Chicago businessmen favoured enterprising ministers like Dr Frank W Gunsaulus, famous for his 1890 'million-dollar sermon'. Phelps, who had lived in Boston, was probably the one who encouraged Swamiji to go East.⁴

The excuse given in the *Life* that Swamiji went to Boston to save money has always struck me as odd.⁵ From a Midwesterner's point of view, Boston is a very expensive place to live. While it was true that in 1893 Chicago prices were inflated due to World's Fair tourism, Swamiji's problem was more specific: only first-class Chicago hotels would take a man of colour. The more affordable second-class hotels and respectable boarding houses were stricter about protecting their 'reputations'. Boston, however, was more liberal in this respect.

As it turned out, Swamiji seldom lacked invitations to stay in private homes, but his real reason for going to Boston was not to pass time in a small hotel. His real reason for going East was to meet people. On the train in Canada, writer Katherine Abbott Sanborn had promised him introductions to intellectuals, literati, and social

activists—the sort of company that leather merchant Phelps did not provide.

Swamiji's fortunate encounters in Massachusetts restored his hope that he might yet make it to the Parliament of Religions. By taking a circuitous detour to the East coast Swamiji gained three key assets that would enable his success. First, he obtained glowing letters of recommendation from Harvard Professor John Henry Wright; second, independent, educated women such as Katherine Sanborn, Ellen Cheney Johnson, and Kate Tannatt Woods introduced him to the struggle of American women for equality; and third, writer and social activist Franklin Benjamin Sanborn provided him with a preparatory course in the art of conventioneering at the American Social Science Association's annual convention in Saratoga Springs, New York. Consequently, Swamiji returned to Chicago

Map of Indiana Street, Chicago, in 1892



equipped with credentials, appreciation for his cultivated audience, and an understanding of convention protocol.

Meanwhile in Chicago, response to Wright's letters to Dr John Henry Barrows and the Parliament Advisory Council was swift. On 4 September Swamiji wrote to Wright from Salem expressing his 'heartfelt gratitude' because he had received a reply from Chicago about joining the Parliament as a delegate. He was also forwarded a letter, presumably from Dr Charles R Lanman, professor of Sanskrit at Harvard. Wright's letters were having the desired effect, and the right people were responding to news about this unknown, but promising, Hindu monk.⁶

On the morning of 8 September, Swamiji gave his last speech to the Social Science convention in Saratoga Springs.⁷ That afternoon he boarded a train for Albany where he could catch a Chicago-bound train on the Niagara Falls Route. The approximately 900-mile journey took about twenty-four hours.⁸ But strangely, upon his return, he got lost.

Lost in Chicago! So lost that he had to spend the night in a boxcar—whereas on his first arrival in Chicago, he at once checked into a first-class hotel. How did this happen?

Swamiji himself retold this story with humble wonder many times, but naturally he told the heart of the story, and he neglected the sort of petty details that historians relish, such as which railroad line he travelled. A century later, we ask how he could have gotten so turned around. He was a veteran traveller. He had travelled by himself all over India. He had managed to find his way around Hong Kong, Japan, and Boston. Also, he had already spent two weeks in Chicago—albeit most of that was at the Fair grounds.

From references in his letters to Niagara Falls, there is reason to believe that Swamiji travelled

via the Michigan Central Line, both departing from and returning to the same depot in Chicago.⁹ Michigan Central shared the new Illinois Central Depot on the lakefront at the end of Twelfth Street. This new depot, which opened on 17 April 1893, was built to take visitors to the World's Columbian Exposition. Swamiji would already have been familiar with it.

There were extensive railroad yards belonging to the Illinois Central Railroad along the shore of Lake Michigan now occupied by Grant Park and South Lake Shore Drive. These huge lake-front railroad yards were full of boxcars, where a wanderer might spend the night in a pinch—hopefully without being caught. As I was studying an 1892 Rand McNally map, wondering if Swamiji had spent the night in the Illinois Central Railroad yards, I noticed how near they were to the Art Institute and to the Palmer House Hotel. He could certainly have obtained lodging or the information he needed nearby, so it does not make any sense for him to have slept rough here.

In the *Life*, Swamiji related that he had made the acquaintance of a passenger on the train who had promised to give him directions, but when they disembarked at the depot in Chicago the fellow rushed off, and Swamiji realised that he had lost the paper containing his destination address.¹⁰

I assume that this precious address belonged to Dr Barrows, the Chairman of the Parliament of Religions. Probably, he partially recalled that Dr Barrows lived on a street named Indiana. If he discovered his predicament while he was still in the depot, he would have asked someone how to get to Indiana Street—not realising that Dr Barrows lived on Indiana Avenue. *Big difference.* Someone must have directed him north toward Indiana Street. Swamiji probably checked his luggage at the depot and set



Dr John Henry Barrows (1847–1902)

off—unencumbered—and unfortunately, in the wrong direction.

Indiana Street is now called Grand Avenue.

It is anyone's guess how Swamiji might have made his way to Indiana Street. Did he take a horse-drawn cable car or the elevated train? There was no direct line there, so transfers were necessary. At some point in his search he might have paused at the Indiana Street Station, a small train depot beside the Chicago River on the Chicago, Milwaukee and St Paul Railway. The main terminal for these tracks was the 1875 Union Station on Canal Street. Swamiji probably spent a fruitless evening trudging up and down Indiana Street inquiring after Dr Barrows. As night fell, there was no hotel that he could recognise and his pocket change was exhausted. On the 1892 map a smaller railway yard is visible on the west side of the Chicago River by the Indiana Street

Bridge opposite the Indiana Street Station. It is my guess that he spent the night here, or else in some other railroad siding further north along the river.¹¹

Marie Louise Burke has written in her endearing style about the fixed image held by some Indians of Swamiji lodged in a box for the night, because the *Life* states that 'he lay down in a huge empty box in the railroad freight-yards'.¹² The *Life* further stated that he 'knew nothing of city directories or telephones'. That may have been so, but during his long train journeys across North America Swamiji was surely observant enough to notice that vagabonds were sheltering in boxcars or goods-wagons parked in sidings.

Swamiji's predicament was dire, for the reality of riding the rails and sleeping in empty freight cars was a dangerous one. In July 1893, because of the economic depression and silver devaluation, there was a large influx of homeless, out-of-work Colorado miners into Chicago and I am sure many of them did not arrive with passenger tickets. Railroad bosses regularly hired armed guards to clear out tramps. Writers such as Jack London and William H Davies published memoirs of their rough adventures riding the rails as hoboes in the 1890s.

Ever a realist, Swamiji understood the manifold risks to himself and to his mission if he attempted to lead a truly vagabond life in the US. However, despite the hazards and considering the circumstances, I think he felt an overwhelming need to meditate. A dark, empty boxcar was the most expedient option. The next morning, he resumed his search. For a while he followed the 'smell of water'—mentioned in the *Life*—meaning he walked towards Lake Michigan.

The closer he got to the water, the farther he wandered into a desert. He was lost in a desert of wealth. There were few people about the long residential streets. It was Sunday, was everyone

in church? The houses were huge and intimidating to approach. His difficulties were compounded because the people he met seemed to speak only German. They were probably servants in some of the wealthier German homes near Lincoln Park where there were streets named Goethe, Beethoven, and Schiller. German landmarks stretched from the statue of the German explorer, Alexander von Humboldt, in Humboldt Park at the west end of Indiana Street to the Germania Club at 108 West Germania Place near Lincoln Park. German communities throughout America generally retained their language until World War I forced them to speak only English.

Finally, footsore and weary, Swamiji sat down on a curb and gave up his faulty compass to the Lord's will. Today the Episcopal church of St John Chrysostom marks the exact spot where he stopped and resigned himself. The church, however, was not yet built in 1893. St John Chrysostom was dedicated in November 1894, and its appearance was considerably altered after a fire in February 1914.

It does not really matter what the scene was at Swamiji's back. What stood before him was the stone house of the George W Hale family on Dearborn Avenue.¹³ Mrs Ellen Hale observed the forlorn foreign man sitting across the street. She sensed he was no ordinary stranger and she approached him. She asked kindly, 'Sir, are you a delegate to the Parliament of Religions?' It was as if a fresh breeze off Lake Michigan blew away the clouds of doubt and the sun of destiny shone on Swamiji once again.

The dots on the illustrated 1892 map demonstrate a distance of approximately

five miles between the Hale house at 541 North Dearborn Avenue and the Barrows house at 2958 South Indiana Avenue.¹⁴ Ironically, Swamiji had stayed at 1703 Indiana Avenue while a guest of the Phelps, but it is my theory that the mix-up between Street and Avenue took him far enough away from known landmarks that he totally lost his direction.

Possibly later that very day, Swamiji was seated with Dr Barrows in his parlour, along with Virchand Gandhi and Reverend George Candlin, as reported in the *Chicago Record* on

Map of Chicago, in 1892



11 September 1893. Swamiji told the reporter for the *Record*, in part: 'It is very gratifying to us to be recognized in this Parliament, which may have such an important bearing on the religious history of the world.'¹⁵

The opening ceremonies of the Parliament had been carefully planned, but there were several improvisational moments. For example, President Charles Carroll Bonney gave a conscience-pricking introduction to the Honorable Pung Kwang Yu, laying upon Americans their overall poor treatment of the Chinese, and he was loudly applauded. Barrows had to step in and read his speech for him because Yu was unable to make himself heard. Bonney introduced the Shinto Right Reverend Reuchi Shibata, and again Barrows assisted by reading his speech for him. Then the order of speeches apparently had to shuffle because Swamiji was qualmed with stage nerves and repeatedly requested that others go before him. He was certainly conspicuous on the stage, 'clad in gorgeous red apparel, his bronzed face surmounted by a huge turban of yellow', but at the time, the press were not sure who he was.¹⁶ His name had not been in the advance publicity about delegates. Several journalists assumed he must be Manilal Dvivedi.¹⁷ Swamiji had good reason to be nervous: 'They [the other Indian delegates] were all prepared and came with ready-made speeches. I was a fool and had none.'¹⁸ According to a reminiscence in *New Discoveries*, Reverend G Bonet-Maury noticed his hesitance and kindly encouraged him to step up to the lectern.¹⁹

Much has been made of Swamiji's historic greeting to the Parliament of Religions and how the applause for his first five words lasted several minutes. As the story has been traditionally told, when Swamiji finally rose that afternoon, he prayed to Sarasvati, greeted the audience, and as if by magic, four thousand people rose up and

cheered him wildly. There had been many ovations that day—weren't people tired of clapping?

As Swamiji stood to speak, Dr Barrows came forward to introduce him. What did Barrows say? Burke reprinted a clue from the 12 September 1893 *Chicago Times* stating: 'Prof. Wright of Harvard is quoted as saying that he is one of the best educated men in the world' (1.87). That comment gains weight when combined with a newly discovered report printed in the *Dallas Morning News* clarifying that Dr Barrows read from Wright's letter as he was introducing Swamiji:

This Brahmin monk made a profound impression upon the people and from the moment of his introduction to the parliament he was a general favorite. ... He was introduced by Dr. Barrows on the opening day of the parliament, which day was mostly devoted to introductions and greetings; and as Dr. Barrows introduced him he said: 'I have the pleasure of introducing Swami Viva Kananda of Bombay, India, who was sent to me by a professor of Harvard university, who said: "He knows more than all our faculty put together." Of course that brought forth great shouts of greeting from the audience, as the sweetness of character was so plainly expressed in his face that he won all hearts at once, and his popularity was established from that time, and no one was disappointed in the man.'²⁰

All we know of Prof. Wright's letter is the oft-quoted line from the *Life*: 'Here is a man who is more learned than all our learned professors put together.'²¹ The letter surely no longer exists and its full text is unknown. Letters of recommendation are generally confidential. I doubt that Wright would have read it to Swamiji. Instead Swamiji recalled the parts that Barrows read aloud. Years later in India, somehow the original word 'faculty' was quaintly translated into 'learned professors'. Thus Mrs Yarnell in the

India, was next introduced. When Mr. Vivekananda addressed the audience as "sisters and brothers of America", there arose a peal of applause that lasted for several minutes.²²

Swamiji himself said the 'deafening' applause lasted for two minutes and that when he finished he was 'exhausted with emotion'.²³ How did the other Indian delegates fare with their speeches? Four of them preceded Swamiji and one followed.²⁴ How did they greet Chicago? Pratap Chandra Mazumdar of the Brahmo Samaj, started with: 'Leaders of the Parliament of Religions, Men and Women of America.' Anagarika Dharmapala of the Mahabodhi Society, began: 'Friends: I bring to you the good wishes of four hundred seventy-five million Buddhists.' Virchand Gandhi, a Jain, opened with: 'Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen.' C N Chakravarti, a Theosophist, said: 'I came here to represent a religion, the dawn of which appeared in a misty antiquity.' B B Nagarkar of the Brahmo Samaj, whose turn came two speakers after Swamiji, commenced his address with: 'Brothers and Sisters in the Western Home.' None of these openings had quite the cachet of 'Sisters and Brothers of America'.

Swamiji had reversed the more familiar refrain of 'Brothers and Sisters', and the female half of the audience instantly responded to his recognition. He had saluted the Home Team! Did he say this out of calculation? I think not. Did he say this out of courteous deference? I think not. I think he spoke out of gratitude. Psychologists say that gratitude is an emotion that not only elevates your own mood, it elevates the happiness of people around you. Swamiji was one who could feel and project gratitude on a cosmic level. I imagine that his mental salutation to Goddess Sarasvati conjured the images of people who had recently been kind to him—and many of those kind ones were his new American mothers. Ellen

Hale was surely in the audience. The surprising clarity and beauty of Swamiji's voice, and above all, the sincerity of his tone struck home. The response was electric.

Burke reconstructed Swamiji's speech from four separate newspaper reports.²⁵ After melting his listener's hearts with 'it fills my heart with joy unspeakable', Swamiji sent out five messages of thanks. Then Swamiji named five things about his religion and his country that made him 'proud'. Mazumdar, Dharmapala, and Gandhi were considered good speakers, but Swamiji's speech had an immediacy and an inclusiveness that moved people to rejoice with him. He was interrupted by applause twice; first, for stating that the word 'exclusion' was untranslatable in Sanskrit, and second, for pronouncing a 'death-knell to all fanaticism'. His crowning achievement was to boldly assert: 'The present Convention, which is one of the most august assemblies ever held, is in itself a vindication, a declaration to the world of the wonderful doctrine preached in the Gita. "Whosoever comes to me, through whatsoever form I reach him, they are all struggling through the paths that in the end always lead to me."'²⁶

Imagine! He declared to all these Christians that their assembly vindicated the Gita! And they loved it.

Celebrity, of course, has its downside. Swamiji told Alasinga, 'I am a hater of celebrity'.²⁷ An article in *The Pittsburg Press*, 24 September 1893 seems to confirm his sentiment:

One of the most interesting personages, to the multitude, is Prof. Swami Vivikononda [*sic*], of Bombay, a Hindoo theologian of great learning. Prof. Vivikononda, who is of pleasing appearance, and young to be so well filled with the ancient lore of India, made an address which captured the congress, so to speak. There were bishops and ministers of nearly

every Christian church present, and they were all taken by storm. The eloquence of the man, with intellect beaming from his yellow face, his splendid English in describing the beauties of his time-honored faith, all conspired to make a deep impression on the audience. From the day the wonderful professor delivered that speech, which was followed by other addresses, he was followed by a crowd wherever he went. In going in and coming out of the building he was daily beset by hundreds of women who almost fought with each other for a chance to get near him and shake his hand.

It may safely be set down that there were women of every denomination among his worshipers. Some of them were votaries of fashion who did not care what became of their fine toilets in the struggle, while others were the 'mothers in Israel' of the various churches of Chicago and elsewhere. The professor seemed surprised at this homage, but he received it graciously enough until it became tiresome from repetition, and then he made his entries and exits at times when there were no crowds of women in the vestibule and corridors.²⁸

This article segues to the one reprinted by Burke, which began: 'There is a room at the left of the entrance to the Art Palace marked "No. 1—keep out". To this the speakers at the Congress of Religions all repair sooner or later.'²⁹ A reporter for the *Boston Evening Transcript* found Swamiji in retreat here behind doors that were 'jealously guarded from the general public' (*ibid.*). As Wright had explained to him at the outset, 'This [Parliament of Religions] is the only way by which you can be introduced to the nation at large'.³⁰ Now Swamiji's name was writ large. Fame is a two-edged sword. It was necessary for his work, but at a stroke it bled away precious and much needed solitude. Regardless, he accomplished what he set out to do, and his accomplishment had been a unique combination of talent, tapasya, determination, and divine intervention.

PB

Notes and References

1. *His Eastern and Western Disciples, The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, 3 vols (Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, 1914), 2.274.
2. See Asim Chaudhuri, *Swami Vivekananda in Chicago: New Findings* (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2000), 151.
3. See Diane Marshall, 'Swami Vivekananda's First Impression of Chicago Hospitality: The Social Context Behind the Culture Clash', *Prabuddha Bharata*, 121/10 (October 2016), 683–90.
4. Phelps was originally from Stonington, Connecticut. Before coming to Chicago he had a brokerage business in Boston and was a member of the prestigious Algonquin Club. Phelps, who had an extensive library, probably gave Swamiji the old philosophy books that he unloaded from the train in Metcalf, Massachusetts.
5. See *Life*, 2.276.
6. See Marie Louise Burke, *Swami Vivekananda in the West: New Discoveries*, 6 vols (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1985), 1.53.
7. See 'The Poor People of India', *New York Tribune*, 8 September 1893. This article reporting Swamiji's speech was datelined 8 September and stated that the Social Science convention closed at noon.
8. To connect with the Niagara Falls Route train at Albany, he would have to leave Saratoga by 4:30 p.m. That train arrived in Chicago at 4:30 p.m. the next day.
9. Swamiji wrote to his brother disciples at the Alambazar monastery in 1894: 'I have seen the Niagara Falls seven or eight times, the Lord be praised!' (*The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 9 vols (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1–8, 1989; 9, 1997), 6.292).
10. See *Life*, 2.280.
11. See *Standard Map of Chicago*, 1892 (Illinois: Rand McNally, 1892). Preserved at the University of Chicago Library Map Collection <<https://tinyurl.com/ybcf3jtz>> accessed on 06 August 2018.
12. *Life*, 2.280. See *New Discoveries*, 1.59.
13. The house is no longer extant. Its approximate address is now 1415 North Dearborn Street.
14. Dunbar Park, created in the 1960s, now marks the former location of 2958 South Indiana Avenue.

- 15. *New Discoveries*, 1.60.
- 16. *The World's Parliament of Religions*, ed. Rev. John Henry Barrows, 2 vols (Chicago: Parliament Publishing, 1893), 1.62.
- 17. Dvivedi, though named as a delegate, did not travel to America. His first paper was read by Virchand Gandhi (See *Chicago Inter Ocean*, 13 September 1893, 3) and his second paper was read by Prof. Goodspeed of the University of Chicago (See *Chicago Tribune*, 26 September 1893, 22).
- 18. *Life*, 2.286. Papers of the prepared speeches could have been handed to the secretaries for the Parliament Committee, who in turn may have shared those texts with the press. Swamiji spoke extemporaneously, so the record of his speech depended upon the spontaneous accuracy of various on-site transcribers.
- 19. See *New Discoveries*, 1.142–3.
- 20. Mrs. Dr. Yarnell, 'A Critical Lecture on the Parliament of Religions', *Dallas Morning News*, 8 January 1894, 8.
- 21. *Life*, 2.279.
- 22. *The World's Parliament of Religions*, 1.101.
- 23. Letter to Alasinga Perumal dated 2 November 1893. *Complete Works*, 5.21.
- 24. Actually two Indians followed Swamiji, but Jeanne Sorabji identified herself as a Christian. Her opening words corrected Dr Barrows's introduction of her as a Parsi.
- 25. See *New Discoveries*, 1.83–4.
- 26. *The World's Parliament of Religions*, 1.102.
- 27. *Complete Works*, 5.21.
- 28. 'Missionaries of Buddha', *The Pittsburg Press*, 24 September 1893, 3.
- 29. *Boston Evening Transcript*, 23 September 1893, cited in *New Discoveries*, 1.87–8.
- 30. *Life*, 2.279.

*Swami Vivekananda on the Dais of
the World's Parliament of Religions at Chicago*





Swami Vivekananda's Chicago Addresses— An Analysis for the Present Time

Swami Satyapriyananda

IT WAS 11 SEPTEMBER, 1893, a memorable day which marked the beginning of a series of eloquent speeches by Swami Vivekananda at the World's Parliament of Religions held in Chicago. Each utterance is breathtaking, being relevant for all time, especially today. We analyse the speeches delivered by him during this 125th anniversary of the glorious event.

The very opening five words, 'Sisters and Brothers of America',¹ cast a magic spell on the audience who gave a standing ovation with clapping of hands for several minutes. As Swamiji was wont to point out often, words never carry so much effect to the audience as does the character of the person uttering those words. One

may not be well-educated, intelligent, or have oratorical skills, and yet the simplicity, conviction, and sincerity of one's utterance will carry such strength as to mesmerise the listeners.

Swamiji said: 'It fills my heart with joy unspeakable.' The 'unspeakable joy' may be due to several reasons: (a) The occasion proved the truth of the utterance of Sri Ramakrishna regarding the future role of his favourite disciple; (b) that it was under Sri Ramakrishna's guiding hands which beckoned him to follow him to the West that he could gain his entrance to the Parliament and speak before the august assembly; (c) that the presentation before the intelligentsia would prove to be the excellent conduit for

placing the liberal and scientific ideas of Hinduism before the whole world.

The reference to 'the most ancient order of monks in the world', 'the mother of all religions' implying Hinduism, and the 'millions and millions of Hindu people of all classes and sects' is a matter of great pride for every Indian. As to why Swamiji referred to Hinduism as the 'mother of all religions' will be clear from his own utterances elsewhere:

All of religion is contained in the Vedanta, that is, in the three stages of the Vedanta philosophy, the Dvaita, Vishishtadvaita and Advaita; one comes after the other. These are the three stages of spiritual growth in man. Each one is necessary. This is the essential of religion: the Vedanta, applied to the various ethnic customs and creeds of India, is Hinduism. The first stage, i.e. Dvaita, applied to the ideas of the ethnic groups of Europe, is Christianity; as applied to the Semitic groups, Mohammedanism. The Advaita, as applied in its Yoga-perception form, is Buddhism etc. Now by religion is meant the Vedanta; the applications must vary according to the different needs, surroundings, and other circumstances of different nations. You will find that although the philosophy is the same, the Shaktas, Shaivas, etc. apply it each to their own special cult and forms (5.81–2).

Swamiji points out that all religions take the practitioner to the same goal, which is raising the brute human being to the civilised human being and thence to the divine human being. In support, he quotes from the *Shivamahimna Stotram*: 'As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee.' He further quotes from the Bhagavad-gita: 'Whosoever comes to Me, through whatsoever form, I reach him; all men are struggling

through paths which in the end lead to Me.'

Swamiji says elsewhere:

I studied the Christian religion, the Mohammedan, the Buddhistic, and others, and what was my surprise to find that the same foundation principles taught by my religion were also taught by all religions. ... Is this world true? Yes. Why? Because I see it. Are the beautiful sounds we just heard ... true? Yes. Because we heard them. We know that man has a body, eyes, and ears, and he has a spiritual nature which we cannot see. And with his spiritual faculties he can study these different religions and find that whether a religion is taught in the forests and jungles of India or in a Christian land, in essentials all religions are one. This only shows us that religion is a constitutional necessity of the human mind. The proof of one religion depends on the proof of all the rest (1.318).

Swamiji thanked those speakers on the platform who told that these delegates from the Orient may well claim the honour of bearing to different lands the idea of toleration. In this regard he said: 'I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions as true.' The ideas of 'both tolerance and universal acceptance' is very significant today when India is being falsely accused as being intolerant. Leave alone the idea of toleration, which suggests that the other is wrong and out of goodwill I am tolerating the other, the concept of 'acceptance' is in the blood of the Hindus.

Swamiji also pointed out another important characteristic of the Hindu nation: sheltering 'the persecuted and the refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth'. The nation 'gathered in her bosom the purest remnant of the Israelites, who came to Southern India and took refuge ... in the very year in which their holy temple was shattered to pieces by Roman tyranny'. The nation also 'sheltered and is still fostering the

remnant of the grand Zoroastrian nation'. Thus not merely does Hinduism accept all religions as its very children but the nation has given shelter to 'the persecuted and the refugees of all religions and all nations'. This is no small achievement.

In strong contrast, 'Sectarianism, bigotry, and its horrible descendant, fanaticism, have long possessed this beautiful earth. They have filled the earth with violence, drenched it often and often with human blood, destroyed civilisation and sent whole nations to despair. Had it not been for these horrible demons, human society would have been far more advanced than it is now. But their time is come.' Sooner than later, Swamiji pointed out that, there will be an end to 'all fanaticism', to 'all persecutions with the sword or with the pen, and' to 'all uncharitable feelings between persons wending their way to the same goal'.

Developing his thesis logically, Swamiji places before the intellectuals the central concepts of Hinduism in his 'Paper on Hinduism' on 19 September 1893, which is his masterpiece. Swamiji rose to speak about the religion of the Hindus 'but when he ended, Hinduism had been created', so remarked Sister Nivedita in her Introduction to the *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (1.x).

Speaking of the theory of incarnation, and how we, who cannot remember our past lives, can experience all the experiences stored up deep within the mind, Swamiji asserts in his 'Paper on Hinduism': 'The human soul is eternal and immortal, perfect and infinite, and death means only a change of centre from one body to another. The present is determined by our past actions, and the future by the present. The soul will go on evolving up or reverting back from birth to birth and death to death' (1.10).

As to the way to terminate the cycle of birth and death, Swamiji recounts the call of the ancient sages: "Hear, ye children of immortal bliss! even ye that reside in higher spheres! I have

found the Ancient One who is beyond all darkness, all delusion: knowing Him alone you shall be saved from death over again" (1.11).

Amidst people who had been told to believe themselves to be sinners, Swamiji addressed them as the 'children of immortal bliss'. What a relief it must have been!

'Children of immortal bliss' ... the Hindu refuses to call you sinners. Ye are the Children of God, the sharers of immortal bliss, holy and perfect beings. Ye divinities on earth—sinners! It is a sin to call a man so; it is a standing libel on human nature. Come up, O lions, and shake off the delusion that you are sheep; you are souls immortal, spirits free, blest and eternal; ye are not matter, ye are not bodies; matter is your servant, not you the servant of matter (*ibid.*).

Regarding the concept of God, Swamiji said: The Vedas proclaim not a dreadful combination of unforgiving laws, not an endless prison of cause and effect, but that at the head of all these laws, in and through every particle of matter and force, stands One 'by whose command the wind blows, the fire burns, the clouds rain, and death stalks upon the earth' ... He is everywhere, the pure and formless One, the Almighty and the All-merciful. 'Thou art our father, Thou art our mother, Thou art our beloved friend, Thou art the source of all strength; give us strength. Thou art He that beareth the burdens of the universe; help me bear the little burden of this life.' Thus sang the Rishis of the Vedas. And how to worship Him? Through love. 'He is to be worshipped as the one beloved, dearer than everything in this and the next life' (*ibid.*).

Developing this doctrine of love declared in the Vedas, Sri Krishna 'taught that a man ought to live in this world like a lotus leaf, which grows in water but is never moistened by water; so a man ought to live in the world—his heart to God and his hands to work' (1.12). Highlighting love for love's sake, Swamiji said that while it was

good to love God for hope of reward in this or the next world ... it is better to love God for love's sake, and the prayer goes: 'Lord, I do not want wealth, nor children, nor learning. If it be Thy will, I shall go from birth to birth, but grant me this, that I may love Thee without the hope of reward—love unselfishly for love's sake. ... I love the Lord. He is the source of all beauty, of all sublimity. He is the only object to be loved; my nature is to love Him, and therefore I love. I do not pray for anything; I do not ask for anything. Let Him place me wherever He likes. I must love Him for love's sake. I cannot trade in love' (*ibid.*).

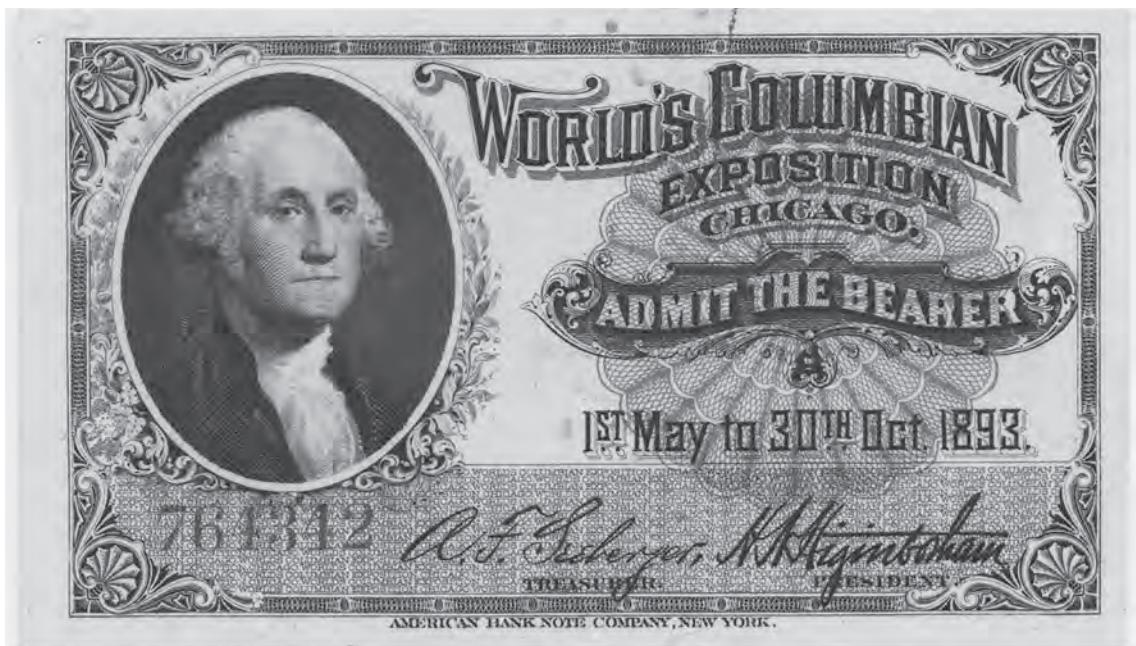
Next Swamiji takes up the concept of mukti or freedom in Hinduism:

The Vedas teach that the soul is divine, only held in the bondage of matter; perfection will be reached when this bond will burst, and the word they use for it is therefore, Mukti—freedom, freedom from the bonds of imperfection, freedom from death and misery. And this bondage can only fall off through the mercy of God,

and this mercy comes on the pure. So purity is the condition of His mercy. How does that mercy act? He reveals Himself to the pure heart; the pure and the stainless see God, yea, even in this life; then and then only all the crookedness of the heart is made straight. Then all doubt ceases. He is no more the freak of a terrible law of causation. This is the very centre, the very vital conception of Hinduism (1.12–3).

The proof of the pudding is in the eating, it is said. Applied to religions, Swamiji says that the best proof a Hindu sage gives about the soul, about God, is: 'I have seen the soul; I have seen God.' And that is the only condition of perfection. The Hindu religion does not consist in struggles and attempts to believe a certain doctrine or dogma, but in realising—not in believing, but in being and becoming. Thus the whole object of their system is by constant struggle to become perfect, to become divine, to reach God and see God, and this reaching God, seeing God ... constitutes the religion of the Hindus. And what becomes of a man when he attains

An Entry Ticket for the World's Columbian Exposition, 1893



perfection? He lives a life of bliss infinite. He enjoys infinite and perfect bliss, having obtained the only thing in which man ought to have pleasure, namely God, and enjoys the bliss with God. So far all the Hindus are agreed. This is the common religion of all the sects of India; but, then, perfection is absolute, and the absolute cannot have any qualities. It cannot be an individual. And so when a soul becomes perfect and absolute, it must become one with Brahman. ... Then alone can death cease when I am one with life, then alone can misery cease when I am one with happiness itself, then alone can all errors cease when I am one with knowledge itself; and this is the necessary scientific conclusion. Science has proved to me that physical individuality is a delusion, that really my body is one little continuously changing body in an unbroken ocean of matter; and Advaita (unity) is the necessary conclusion with the other counterpart, soul (1.13–4).

There is thus solidarity at all levels: in matter, in mind, and in soul. Our limited physical matter is a part of the infinite ocean of matter; our limited subtle matter or mind are waves and ripples in the ocean of mind; and our souls are but 'delusive manifestations' of the universal Soul. Thus science and religion can go no farther when this unity is reached. This unity is the goal of religion and science. Removing the misconceptions about the many gods and goddesses and about worship in images, Swamiji says: 'At the very outset, I may tell you that there is no *polytheism* in India. In every temple ... one will find the worshippers applying all the attributes of God, including omnipresence, to the images' (1.15).

The image is not God but God is in the image. 'Amongst them that are called idolaters, [exist] men, the like of whom in morality and spirituality and love' (*ibid.*) are rare to find. He was referring to Sri Ramakrishna and possibly Gopal's Mother too. Swamiji says:

By the laws of our mental constitution, we have to associate our ideas of infinity with the image

of the blue sky, or of the sea, so we naturally connect our idea of holiness with the image of a church, a mosque, or a cross. The Hindus have associated the idea of holiness, purity, truth, omnipresence, and such other ideas with different images and forms. But with this difference that while some people devote their whole lives to their idol of a church and never rise higher, because with them religion means an intellectual assent to certain doctrines and doing good to their fellows, the whole religion of the Hindu is centred in realisation. Man is to become divine by realising the divine. Idols or temples or churches or books are only the supports, the helps, of his spiritual childhood: but on and on he must progress (1.16).

Just as a court of law reminds us of the advocate, even so the sight of an advocate brings to our mind the court of law. This is by the law of reciprocal association. Swamiji goes on further:

He must not stop anywhere. '*External worship, material worship*', say the scriptures, '*is the lowest stage; struggling to rise high, mental prayer is the next stage, but the highest stage is when the Lord has been realised*'. Mark, the same earnest man who is kneeling before the idol tells you, '*Him the sun cannot express, nor the moon, nor the stars, the lightning cannot express Him, nor what we speak of as fire; through Him they shine*'. But he does not abuse any one's idol or call its worship sin. He recognises in it a necessary stage of life. '*The child is father of the man*' ... If a man can realise his divine nature with the help of an image, would it be right to call that a sin? Nor even when he has passed that stage, should he call it an error. To the Hindu, man is not travelling from error to truth, but from truth to truth, from lower to higher truth. To him all the religions, from the lowest fetishism to the highest absolutism, mean so many attempts of the human soul to grasp and realise the Infinite. ... To the Hindu, then, the whole world of religions is only a travelling, a coming up, of different men and women, through

various conditions and circumstances, to the same goal. Every religion is only evolving a God out of the material man, and the same God is the inspirer of all of them. ... The contradictions come from the same truth adapting itself to the varying circumstances of different natures. ... I challenge the world to find, throughout the whole system of Sanskrit philosophy, any such expression as that the Hindu alone will be saved and not others. Says Vyasa, '*We find perfect men even beyond the pale of our caste and creed.*' ... How, then, can the Hindu, whose whole fabric of thought centres in God, believe in Buddhism which is agnostic, or in Jainism which is atheistic? The Buddhists or the Jains do not depend upon God; but the whole force of their religion too is directed to the great central truth in every religion, to evolve a God out of man (1.16–19).

Developing the concept of a universal religion, Swamiji says:

If there is ever to be a universal religion, it must be one which will have no location in place or time; which will be infinite like the God it will preach, and whose sun will shine upon the followers of Krishna and of Christ, on saints and sinners alike; which will not be Brahminic or

Buddhistic, Christian or Mohammedan, but the sum total of all these, and still have infinite space for development; which in its catholicity will embrace in its infinite arms, and find a place for, every human being, from the lowest grovelling savage not far removed from the brute, to the highest man towering by the virtues of his head and heart almost above humanity, making society stand in awe of him and doubt his human nature. It will be a religion which will have no place for persecution or intolerance in its polity, which will recognise divinity in every man and woman, and whose whole scope, whose whole force, will be created in aiding humanity to realise its own true, divine nature (1.19).

In his talk on 26 September 1893, 'Buddhism, the Fulfilment of Hinduism', Swamiji says:

The relation between Hinduism ... and ... Buddhism ... is nearly the same as between Judaism and Christianity. Jesus Christ was a Jew, and Shakya Muni was a Hindu. The Jews rejected Jesus Christ ... and the Hindus accepted Shakya Muni as God and worship him. ... As the Jew did not understand the fulfilment of the Old Testament, so the Buddhist did not understand the fulfilment of the truths of the Hindu religion.

Chicago Day, 9 October 1893, at the World's Columbian Exposition



... Shakya Muni came not to destroy, but he was the fulfilment, the logical conclusion, the logical development of the religion of the Hindus. ...

The great glory of the Master [Buddha] lay in his wonderful sympathy for everybody, especially for the ignorant and the poor. ... And so to this day the great bulk of his teachings are in the vernacular of that day India. ... so long as there is such a thing as death in the world, so long as there is such a thing as weakness in the human heart, so long as there is a cry going out of the heart of man in his very weakness, there shall be faith in God. On the philosophic side the disciples of the Great Master [Buddha] dashed themselves against the eternal rocks of the Vedas and could not crush them, and on the other side they took away from the nation that eternal God to which every one, man or woman, clings so fondly. And the result was that Buddhism had to die a natural death in India. ...

But at the same time, Brahminism lost something—that reforming zeal, that wonderful sympathy and charity for everybody, that wonderful leaven which Buddhism had brought to the masses and which had rendered Indian society so great that a Greek historian who wrote about India of that time was led to say that no Hindu was known to tell an untruth and no Hindu woman was known to be unchaste. Hinduism cannot live without Buddhism, nor Buddhism without Hinduism. ... This separation between the Buddhists and the Brahmins is the cause of the downfall of India. That is why India is populated by three hundred millions of beggars, and that is why India has been the slave of conquerors for the last thousand years. Let us then join the wonderful intellect of the Brahmins with the heart, the noble soul, the wonderful humanising power of the Great Master (1.21–3).

In his 'Address at the Final Session' on 27 September 1893, Swamiji said:

Much has been said of the common ground of religious unity. ... But if any one here hopes that this unity will come by the triumph of any one of

the religions and the destruction of the other, to him I say, 'Brother, yours is an impossible hope.' Do I wish that the Christian would become Hindu? God forbid. Do I wish that the Hindu or Buddhist would become Christian? God forbid. The seed is put in the ground, and earth and air and water are placed around it. Does the seed become the earth, or the air, or the water? No. It becomes a plant, it develops after the law of its own growth, assimilates the air, the earth, and the water, converts them into plant substance, and grows into a plant. Similar is the case with religion. The Christian is not to become a Hindu or a Buddhist, nor a Hindu or a Buddhist to become a Christian. But each must assimilate the spirit of the others and yet preserve his individuality and grow according to his own law of growth (1.24).

Swamiji concludes the lecture series by pointing out that if

the Parliament of Religions has shown anything to the world it is this: It has proved to the world that holiness, purity and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any church in the world, and that every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character. In the face of this evidence, if anybody dreams of the exclusive survival of his own religion and the destruction of the others, I pity him from the bottom of my heart, and point out to him that upon the banner of every religion will soon be written, in spite of resistance: 'Help and not Fight,' 'Assimilation and not Destruction,' 'Harmony and Peace and not Dissension.'

This grand utterance must always be borne in mind by both the fanatic and the ever tolerant Hindu.



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Swami Vivekananda and the World's Parliament of Religions, 1893 —New Perspectives

Swami Narasimhananda

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA lives even today through his words that shake the reader to one's very foundations. He is fulfilling his prophecy: 'It may be that I shall find it good to get outside of my body—to cast it off like a disused garment. But I shall not cease to work! I shall inspire men everywhere, until the world shall know that it is one with God.'¹ His words are not mere articulations of thought, but they represent the most radical of ethos transmitted through powerful spiritual energy that transforms all who receive them and continues to grow as part of their personalities, and finally engulfs them in an ocean of holy poise, and elevates those who show endeavour, to the fulfilling knowledge of non-difference

and to the realisation of Self. To Swamiji, it was Sri Ramakrishna, who staged the World's Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893.

Chronicling the Parliament

The proceedings of the World's Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893 has been historically recorded with meticulous care by many people, notable being the account by John Henry Barrows (1847–1902), the clergyman of the First Presbyterian Church, who was the chairman of the Parliament. Before the Parliament, Barrows announced that the

convention was to take place during the month of September, 1893, and was to consist of a series

of separate congresses, which were to be followed by a massive seventeen-day Parliament of the world's religions. Each of the seventeen days was to be devoted to a specific theme—ethical, social, historical, or theological. Thus the third day of the Parliament concerned itself with the nature of man, the sixth with sacred books, the ninth with the relationship of religion to science and art, the eleventh with social problems, and the fifteenth with religious reunion. Upon each of these days international authorities were invited to deliver addresses in the main auditorium and participate in more intimate religious discussions in smaller rooms set aside for that purpose.²

Barrows published the most authoritative account of the Parliament in two volumes with numerous illustrations. He was quite hopeful of the readership of these volumes:

This Book will also be read in the cloisters of Japanese scholars, by the shores of the Yellow Sea, by the watercourses of India and beneath the shadows of Asiatic mountains near which rose the primal habitations of man. It is believed that the Oriental reader will discover in these volumes the source and strength of that simple faith in Divine Fatherhood and Human Brotherhood, which, embodied in an Asiatic Peasant who was the Son of God and made divinely potent through Him, is clasping the globe with bands of heavenly light.³

In the end of the second volume, Barrows comments upon the Parliament: 'The Parliament was not a place for the suppression of opinions but for their frankest utterance, and what made it so supremely successful was mutual tolerance, extraordinary courtesy, and unabated good will. Christians who entered the Hall of Columbus with timidity and misgivings found themselves entirely at home in an atmosphere charged with religious enthusiasm' (2.1560).

Apart from Barrows's account of the Parliament, Walter R Houghton also recorded the proceedings of the Parliament. By far, the accounts

of Barrows and Houghton are the only complete and most accurate records of the Parliament. According to Houghton, the 'work of organization [for the Exposition] began in 1890, and was carried on by the committees until the opening of the congresses in May of 1893'.⁴ Unlike Barrows's account, which was in two volumes, Houghton's account was in a single volume with the remark on the title page, 'Two Volumes in One'. The publisher's note ends in a happy tone: 'There is no soaring dream of future perfection, no kindly thrill of goodness, no yearning for the unseen, no prayer for light and truth, which may not be met or answered in these triumphal announcements of the faith of Humanity. The golden chain of brotherhood here forged shall endure and shall lead all men up toward that heaven in which there shall be no more sorrow, and the shadows of parting shall be lifted for eternity' (10). Houghton's account has the photo of Swamiji in which he is holding a rolled-up paper (505). The last part of this volume contains 'Biographies, Articles, and Opinions' (971).

Much before the Parliament or the Columbian Exposition, the Catholic community was celebrating the discovery of Columbus, who 'remained a hero for most of the nineteenth century'.⁵ There was a great anticipation to know about other religions and faith-traditions through the Parliament. For instance, Merwin-Marie Snell was quite hopeful about the Parliament:

In the month of September there is to take place in Chicago an event which promises to be epoch-making in the history of religions, and perhaps, by its ultimate consequences, in the general history of mankind. I refer to the World's Parliament of Religions, at which the representatives of the Catholic, Oriental and Protestant forms of Christianity, with their various sub-divisions, will meet on equal terms with those of the different sects of Judaism, Mohammedanism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism,

Parseeism, Confucianism, Taoism, Shintoism, and other non-Christian systems.

These religious bodies will present to the Parliament, through their accredited representatives, a statement of their teachings, practices and claims, and many of them will also have special congresses of their own, in which their doctrines, histories and practical methods will be still more fully exhibited. ...

Only a small proportion of the sacred books of the world have thus far been translated by European scholars and placed within the reach of the student; and these books can have but a partial and preliminary value so long as the complicated systems which have produced them, or grown out of them, have not been studied in the details of their historical development, subdivision, reproduction, interaction and fusion.

What does European scholarship know, for example, about the religious development of India, in spite of the vast amount of good work which has been done in that field by Vedic scholars, general philologists, and other classes of students? There exists to this day but one professedly original résumé (and that very imperfect, and based to a large extent upon a native work) of the *existing sects* of Hinduism, and from this all other descriptions have been, for the most part, copied or abstracted.

Who is there, even among professional Indianists, who is thoroughly acquainted with the various ramifications of either Vaishnava, Saiva or Sakti Hinduism, the dates and circumstances of origin of the sects into which they are divided, the minutiae and sources of their doctrinal and practical differences, and their relative dependence upon ancient Vedic or non-Vedic Aryan religion,

the pre-Aryan cults of Bactria and India, Mohammedan and Christian influences, the old and new philosophical schools, and internal processes of corruption and decay or of constructive or agglutinative development? ...

The proceedings of the parliament will form an invaluable addition to the materials for the study of religions, but as many as possible of those who take a scientific interest, in the subject, should attend the parliament in person, so that they may in face-to-face intercourse with the picked representatives of the Christian, Jewish, Moslem and pagan sects and sub-sects, if not by their action in the great congress itself, bring out and note for their own use, and the future uses of science, the many facts which will otherwise fail to be collected.⁶

At the turn of the last decade of the nineteenth century, efforts were already underway to teach the major religions in schools in the US and some courses had already been developed. Emily Mace describes this development:

Between 1890 and 1896, the Western Unitarian Sunday School Society (WUSSS), headquartered in Chicago, disseminated a religious education

Swami Vivekananda and Other Indian Participants at the World's Parliament of Religions, Chicago



curriculum called the ‘Six Years’ Course in Religion’ to liberal Sunday schools across the country. The course, first published by the WUSSS from 1890 to 1896, emerged out of the milieu of academic and popular interest in evolutionary understandings of the origins of religion, comparative theology, the ‘science’ of comparative religions, and the higher criticism of the Bible. Most schools using the course included flourishing Midwestern congregations in places such as Chicago, Minneapolis, and St. Louis, and in cities and towns across the United States. Congregations in places as far distant from each other as Winchester, Massachusetts; Greenville, South Carolina; Greeley, Colorado; and Salem, Oregon, all used the curriculum. Although the course never achieved anything close to the phenomenal success of the uniform lessons of the American Sunday School Union, that this small publication found favor in a variety of places across the United States nonetheless indicates widespread interest in the work of the course.⁷

Of course, in the education of comparative religions, there was a major focus on the training of the missionaries and the local languages were also taught. As noted by *The Biblical World*, ‘An elementary knowledge of Hindi ... [was] of special importance to intending missionaries’.⁸

Jenkin Lloyd Jones (1843–1918), a Unitarian minister brought out another recording of the Parliament by the title *A Chorus of Faith*. It ‘contains one hundred and sixty-seven extracts from one hundred and fifteen different authors, all of them taken from the utterances of the main Parliament’.⁹ This account is neatly divided into various themes of ‘Greeting’, ‘Harmony of the Prophets’, ‘Holy Bibles’, ‘Unity in Ethics’, ‘Brotherhood’, ‘The Soul’, ‘The Thought of God’, ‘The Crowning Day’, and ‘Farewell’. Each section starts with a poem by a leading poet and contains some papers related to the theme. Jones acknowledges the vastness of the record by Barrows and assures that his ‘little book will not take the place of the

larger two-volume history’ (12). We know from Jones that ‘the limits of Columbus Hall, accommodating about three thousand people, was maintained to the end’ (*ibid.*). The extracts published in this volume had been made from ‘remarkably full and satisfactory reports which appeared from day to day in the *Chicago Herald*’ (*ibid.*). Only extracts from Swamiji’s ‘Response to Welcome’, ‘Why We Disagree’, ‘Paper on Hinduism’, and ‘Address at the Final Session’ are given in this volume. The other two lectures, ‘Religion Not the Crying Need of India’ and ‘Buddhism, the Fulfilment of Hinduism’ have not been cited. Jones is not very enthusiastic about the outcome of the Parliament and believes that the Parliament ‘is not going to put an end to bigotry. There are those who distrusted the project and who regret the triumph’ (17).

Jones’s account ends with memoriam to Philip Schaff (1819–93), the Protestant theologian, who passed away the very next month after the Parliament. In the appendices is an extract from a letter written to Jones by Anagarika Dharmapala (1864–1933) which reveals the idea of holding a ‘Parliament of Religions in Benares’ (326). In the appendices are also given a letter from a Christian who is concerned how Christianity ‘can be regarded as a member of a Parliament of Religions without assuming the equality of the other intended members and the parity of their position and claims’ (321). So much for the catholicity of the Catholics! The other two items of the appendices are extracts from addresses by the clergy. The extract from the address by Joseph Cook at the Parliament ends with the note that ‘except Christianity, there is no religion under heaven or among men that effectively provides for the peace of the soul by its harmonization with this environment’ (323). The other address is by Arthur Cleveland Coxe (1818–96), the second Episcopal bishop of Western New York, delivered at the Church of the Epiphany, Chicago. Coxe affirms that

non-Christians are ‘thieves and robbers’ in that they have ‘robbed’ Jesus Christ ‘of millions of souls who should have been sheep of his pasture’ (325).

Another report has twelve addresses delivered by the missionaries of the Church of Christ in the World’s Congresses of Religions that was also organised as part of the World’s Columbian Exposition at Chicago in 1893. The popularity and attendance of these Congresses were not anywhere near those of the Parliament. Nevertheless, these talks were recorded as they ‘are able discussions of great living issues’.¹⁰

There is another, smaller, account of the World’s Parliament of Religions by Reverend L P Mercer, who confuses the Parliament with the World’s Religious Congresses mentioned above. Mercer’s account is called a ‘review’ and has short summaries of most of the papers and complete versions of the opening speeches. Mercer is quite proud of the meetings that were auxiliary to the Columbian Exposition:

When the record of the achievements of the World’s Columbian Exposition shall have been fully written and considered by those far enough removed from the event to form impartial judgments, it will be found that the most remarkable and unique in kind and substantial in results are those of the Auxiliary Congresses, covering more than twenty departments of thought, and embracing over two hundred distinct congresses, participated in by distinguished specialists.¹¹

The mistake of confusing the Parliament with the World’s Religious Congresses is repeated by John Wesley Hanson. His account is almost as large as Barrows’s, however, the same cannot be said about its accuracy. It includes selections from the Parliament and the Religious Congresses. Hanson says in his preface: ‘This volume contains the most and the best of the Parliament and the Congresses. The Parliament papers are largely from authors’ manuscripts or

stenographic reports, and the Congresses are mainly written by eminent clergymen and others who participated in them.’¹²

Charles C Bonney, who originally thought of the idea of the Parliament, hoped that the grand work so auspiciously inaugurated at Chicago in 1893 go forward in renewed efforts, until all the world shall respond to its benign and gracious spirit; and the pure and noble peace it both prophesied and exemplified in the Parliament of Religions shall prevail among all the peoples of the earth, exalting, not only their religious, but at the same time their personal, social, business, and political life. This is the mission of the World’s Religious Parliament Extension.¹³

An Eye-Opener to the Eastern Thought

The World’s Columbian Exposition held in 1893 at Chicago, of which the World’s Parliament of Religions was a part, opened the eyes of the West to many things from the other side of the globe of which the Westerners were oblivious.

Frances Elizabeth Caroline Willard



The Exposition made a welcome departure in accommodating women as speakers on religion, who actively participated and spoke in the proceedings. The proceedings of Second Biennial Convention of the World's Woman Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) and the twentieth Annual Convention of the National Women's Christian Temperance Union was published by their president Frances Elizabeth Caroline Willard (1839–1898), the famous educationist. These proceedings took place in the very same Art Institute building that housed the Parliament. This convention took notice of the Eastern thought and society and how women were treated there. Denouncing alcoholism and emphasising the need to fight it, Willard said in this convention: 'The high caste Hindoos have received the impression that Christianity means intemperance ... High caste women are total abstainers, and they oppose Christianity on no other ground so strongly as because it permits the use of alcoholics [sic]. Although women are in subjection, they still have much power in the home, and Hindoo men do not like to return to their wives with the smell of strong drink on their breath.'¹⁴ Interesting observation indeed! The Parliament not only cleared misconceptions about Eastern faith-traditions, it also cleared wrong ideas about the cultures of the East. As we know well, Swamiji himself had clarified many misconceptions and wrong ideas about Hinduism and India, during the course of the Parliament.

(To be continued)

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The Dawn of Religious Pluralism? —The Importance of the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions at Chicago

Arpita Mitra

THE IDEA OF a series of congresses on different aspects of human life from science to religion,¹ jurisprudence to literature, as part of the great World's Columbian Exposition² of 1893, was the brainchild of Charles Carroll Bonney (1831–1903), an educationist and jurist in Chicago. He had hit upon this idea in the summer of 1889 and by autumn of that year it received favour with others from the intelligentsia and things were under way. Bonney's idea was that these congresses should not be an exhibit of the 'material triumphs, industrial achievements, and mechanical victories of man', but instead showcase 'something higher and nobler' in keeping with the 'progressive spirit' of that age.³ And what would be truly unprecedented of this assemblage was that the delegates would be 'greater in number and more widely representative of all peoples and nations and tongues than any assemblage which has ever yet been convened' (*ibid.*).

The Origin of the Idea

The source of the idea was Bonney's life and theology, which was largely influenced by the theologian and scientist Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772). Bonney wrote later: 'During the organization and conduct of the World's Congresses of 1893, I was led to feel that all my life had been a preparation for that work; and that in a thousand ways provision had been made for

its extraordinary needs.'⁴ Bonney wrote that the beginning of that preparation was in the Sunday school he attended during his boyhood. He became interested in comparative religious studies. When he grew up, he came in touch with the New Church, a new denomination and religious movement inspired by the ideas of Swedenborg. Bonney recorded later: 'In this Church I was taught the fundamental truths which made a World's Parliament of Religions possible; upon which rested the whole plan of the religious congresses of 1893, and which guided the execution of that plan to a success so great and far-reaching that only the coming generations can fully comprehend and estimate its influence' (*ibid.*).

Bonney's statement that 'the supreme significance of this Congress and the others is, that they herald the death of Persecution throughout the world, and proclaim the coming reign of civil and religious liberty'⁵ is rooted in his own orientation for championing the cause of civil liberties on the one hand, and charity within the framework of religion, on the other hand. The goal of the Parliament was thus put forward:

To unite all religion against all irreligion; to make the golden rule the basis of this union; to present to the world in the religious congresses to be held in connexion with the Columbian Exposition of 1893, the substantial unity of many religions in the good deeds of

the religious life; to provide for a World's Parliament of Religions, in which their common aims and common grounds of union may be set forth, and the marvellous religious progress of the nineteenth century reviewed; and to facilitate separate and independent congresses of different religious denominations and organisations, under their own officers, in which their business may be transacted, their achievements presented, and their work for the future considered.⁶

The Uniqueness of a World Event

So, what was the progressive spirit of the age and what was truly unique about the World's Parliament of Religions? Some would consider this Parliament as a striking manifestation of American ecumenism of that time, which mirrored the prevalent reform impulse of that age.⁷ It is often even regarded as the birth of the interfaith movement. Interfaith dialogue which seems so commonplace to us today was being articulated for the first time in the Christian world then. Dr D J Burrell, a delegate from New York remarked: 'Never before has Christianity been brought into such close, open and decisive contact with other religions of the world.'⁸ After all, the 'supreme object of the festival was to end religious strife and persecution; and to secure to every human being, as far and as rapidly as possible, the sacred right to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience'.⁹ If not anything else, the size and complexity of the event was also unprecedented and unique in history.

In the opening ceremony on 11 September 1893, more than four thousand people had assembled in the Hall of Columbus. It is doubtful if this feat was ever repeated.

All That Glitters Is Not Gold

But all was not as rosy as it might appear from the above passages. There are many stumbling blocks

in the path of true plurality. Today it is normal for the world to talk about the equality of all religions. But 125 years ago, it was inconceivable for the Christian world to accept parity with any other faith. Firstly, in spite of everything, 152 out of 194 papers at the Parliament were presented by English-speaking Christian representatives. Secondly, some sections had a different kind of motivation. Donald Bishop quotes from the *American Advocate of Peace* of October 1893: 'Christianity is to conquer and supplant all the other religions of the world ... and this Parliament is one of the steps toward this ultimate triumph.'¹⁰

Bishop identifies three broad approaches of the erstwhile Christian theologians in their reaction to the Parliament: exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism. And within each category, he makes further sub-classifications. These three concepts of exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism went on to become the most popular models for Christian theological attitude towards other religions as well as a Christian theology of typology of religions.¹¹ Christian theological exclusivism means the position that Christ alone is the saviour, and by inference, Christianity is the only true world religion. Inclusivism stands for the theological position that while there is something true in all religions, salvation will eventually come through Christ alone. Pluralism means that all religions are equally valid and potent in their salvific powers.

On the whole, it was largely difficult for most Christian theological leaders of those days to accept that any other religion could be on a par with Christianity. This was notwithstanding the fact that some of them were genuinely interested in knowing about other faiths, and especially in knowing what was common between them and Christianity. This interest took many forms—one of which was the rise of the discipline of comparative religions, and the other was our subject at hand—the World's Parliament of

Religions at Chicago. However, no matter how praiseworthy they found anything in a non-Christian faith, Christianity still remained central in their worldview. As pointed out by David Mislin, for many liberal Protestants of the late nineteenth century, 'the study of other religions was not meant to inspire experimentation but rather was a vehicle to secure one's commitment to Christianity by recognizing that only it offered the height of religious truth'.¹² Mislin points out that one 'Methodist bishop insisted that the Parliament would offer testimony to the universality of Jesus'. Against this backdrop, Mislin does not consider the Parliament to be a unique event, except for in terms of its scale.

It is worth citing further from Mislin:

Washington Gladden [an American Congregational pastor] rejected the position of Thomas Wentworth Higginson [an American Unitarian minister] and other members of the Free Religious Association that the purpose of the Parliament was to formulate 'a universal religion, to supersede all the others'. Its true purpose was to highlight the superiority of Protestant Christianity. 'The Parliament is likely to prove a blessing to many Christians by marking the time when they shall cease thinking that the verities and virtues of other religions discredit the claims of Christianity', declared John Henry Barrows. 'Why should not Christians be glad to learn what God has wrought through Buddha and Zoroaster—through the sage of China, and the prophets of India and the prophet of Islam?' he asked. Why not, indeed? For Barrows and his fellow Protestants, everything God had wrought in those religions had been wrought in higher, purer form through Christianity. ... The conviction of the superiority of Christianity, especially the ubiquitous view that only Christians could have arranged such a gathering, made many Protestants even more firmly committed to the missionary enterprise. James Henry Snowden reaffirmed his view that while they contained many truths, other faiths were

'twilight religions', and their adherents needed to receive Jesus, 'the light of the world' (57–8).

In fact, there were even those who explicitly opposed the idea of a World's Parliament of Religions, for instance, the home church of John Barrows, that is, the Presbyterian Church of the US; the Archbishop of Canterbury, and others.

Its attitude towards other religions has always been a tricky affair for the Church. While there were sympathetic voices, in general, a Eurocentric framework was inbuilt in all their considerations. With respect to the sensitive issue of the validity of other religions, Alan Race cites the following instance:

In an address given in 1958, Canon Max Warren, then General Secretary of the Church Missionary Society, said that the confrontation between Christian belief and agnostic science will turn out to be more like child's play when it is compared to the present challenge to the church in the encounter between Christianity and the other world faiths. This remark is all the more pertinent when we remember that it stems from a distinguished Christian leader who was deeply involved in the missionary work of the church, and who came eventually to see that the old-style confrontation between Christianity and the other faiths was no longer appropriate. It was arrogant and theologically naïve to assume that only Christians apprehended religious truth.¹³

This testimony clearly indicates that even past the middle of the twentieth century, the tension had not been successfully resolved.

Richard Seager is of the opinion that the

Parliament was a liberal, western, and American quest for world religious unity that failed. ... The Parliament, however noble its goals and aspirations, was tainted by the same parochialism, ethnocentrism, imperial pretensions, and hegemonic intentions as the entire Exposition. In philosophical terms, it failed because the

premises for its universalistic agenda turned out to be particularistic. In crude theological terms, it failed because the God of the organizers of the Parliament turned out not to be quite the same as the Gods of the Asians. ... There is also a corollary to this thesis. Having failed as a liberal quest for religious unity, the Parliament unintentionally turned out to be a revelation of the plurality of forces on the American and world scenes. As a result, it was a harbinger of the rise of the idea of religious pluralism.¹⁴

Reverend John Henry Barrows

The Parliament sessions were chaired by John Henry Barrows (1847–1902), a clergyman of the First Presbyterian Church. The distance between the aspiration of inter-faith dialogue and the reality of notions of Christian superiority and missionary designs vis-à-vis India is perhaps not as clearly manifest in any other instance as in the case of Barrows. Within three years of the Parliament, he found it opportune to visit India on a Christian mission—imagine, after having heard all that from Swami Vivekananda at the Parliament! Inspired by the Parliament, Mrs Caroline E Haskell of Michigan City had already endowed a lectureship on comparative religion in her own name at the University of Chicago.¹⁵ It was none other than P C Mazoomdar, who had gone to great lengths in the character assassination of Swamiji, who convinced Mrs Haskell of instituting another such lectureship to be delivered in India.¹⁶ The idea was that ‘Christian scholars of Europe, Asia and America’ would deliver ‘in a friendly, temperate, conciliatory way, and in the fraternal spirit which pervaded the Parliament of Religions’, lectures on ‘the great questions of the truths of Christianity, its harmonies with the truths of other religions, its rightful claims, and the best method of setting them forth’ to ‘the scholarly and thoughtful people of India’ (1). All this is of course a euphemistic way of setting forth

the agenda of a Christian mission to India, and the person instrumental in proposing such an idea was our very own Pratap Chandra Mazoomdar!

Mrs Haskell gave the authority to manage this lecture once again to the University of Chicago. She found it suitable that the lectureship be named after Barrows, who did much to promote ‘friendly relations between Christian America and the people of India’. To this day, Caroline E Haskell and John Henry Barrows Professorships exist in the Divinity School of the University of Chicago. Mrs Haskell also wanted Barrows to deliver the first series of lectures. The result was that he visited India during 1896–7 and his lectures in India were published under the title *Christianity, the World-religion*.¹⁷ The title clearly reflects the standpoint of the lectures.

In 1899, Barrows published another book, *The Christian Conquest of Asia*. While this book had one chapter each on Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and Confucianism, Barrows devoted not less than three chapters on Hinduism: ‘Observations of Popular Hinduism’, ‘Philosophic Hinduism’, and ‘Some Difficulties in the Hindu Mind in Regard to Christianity’. Barrows began with a patronising apology: ‘Their [Hindus] general gentleness of spirit and fineness of mind command love and admiration. The evils on which I dwell are partly corruptions traceable to the Brahmanic priesthood, of ideas and usages which were ethically and spiritually better. It is painful to me to expose the dark side of the religion of a people and country to which I owe so much gratitude.’¹⁸

It might be worthwhile reproducing here one full-length quotation from Barrows just in order to understand his approach towards popular Hinduism:

It is not an inspiring and elevating spectacle, the sight at close range of Hinduism and what it has effected in a land where nearly one-half the people are imprisoned for life, hidden from sight

in the seclusion and social starvation of the *zenana*; in a country with three hundred millions of people and three hundred and thirty three millions of gods, most of whose inhabitants are half-naked, and one-fourth of whom have but a single meal a day, even when famine has not swept away, as during the last twelve months, its millions of victims; a country where idolatry in its most hideous forms spreads its debasing influence, holding in childish enslavement a people whom a pure Christianity is yet to reach, instructing them that God, who is spirit, must be worshipped in spirit and in truth; a country where lying is an immemorial fine art, where English judges are in despair of knowing what testimony in court is true, and where American observers, predisposed, like Colonel Olcott, to look favorably on all things Indian, feel the hopelessness of raising the people out of bottomless depths of moral rottenness; a country where the population, separated by race, language, and religion, are spread over a peninsula so vast that what is said in Calcutta may appear to Lahore like an utterance from another nation, and what is done in Bombay is of little moment, unless it be in the matter of the plague, to those who live in Madras; a country into which Christian civilization has introduced new life, extending its rail roads and telegraphs, its science and political ideals, its schools and colleges, together with the language and literature of England, so widely that the world of Shakespeare and Cromwell and Darwin is perpetually meeting and modifying the mental and spiritual world represented by the laws of Menu [*sic*] and the false morality, false history, false science, and false philosophy of ancient Hinduism; a country where Christian missions have entered with their divine influence, kindling points of celestial light amid general darkness and degradation, but which, on account of its national pride, and the crimes and vices associated with Christendom in its contacts, often cruel and debasing, with the world of India, has not fallen in love with the name Christian; a country made up of divided peoples, cleft horizontally by caste and vertically by race and religion, where life is

disturbed and restless, where men of enlightenment scarcely know what to believe, where the latest materialism and skepticism are studied and adopted, where the eager, patriotic youth in the colleges take delight in discovering the weak points in the history, manners, and characters of their English masters and European teachers, and who, in the recent revival of Hinduism, are groping blindly backward to find, if possible, in their national scriptures, some light equalling the illumination which Christendom has received from Bethlehem and Calvary (62–4).

The *Life of Swami Vivekananda by His Eastern and Western Disciples* has very well documented the unpleasant episode regarding Barrows vis-à-vis Swamiji when the former was visiting India.¹⁹ In spite of Swamiji's letters to various people asking them to welcome Barrows, the latter remained not only unkind but also untruthful vis-à-vis the former. Barrows not only refused to meet him, but also published in newspapers that Swamiji refused to meet him. Of course, as Swamiji pointed out, Barrows's mission to India was a failure because he preached 'the most bigoted Christianity' and naturally nobody listened.

Vivekananda as the Turning Point

But the World's Parliament of Religions was indeed a turning point in the history of religious pluralism, and it was partly so because of Swamiji's participation and the views he aired. His participation in the Parliament was significant from at least two vantage points. Firstly, from what followed after the Parliament, the West received in its own land such a powerful representative of the Hindu religion, who clarified and illuminated many points about the religion. In this respect, my conjecture is that the Congress of the History of Religions held in Paris in 1900 was an even more significant event with respect to the Western reception of Hinduism—but certainly the Paris Congress or Swamiji's participation in it

may not have been possible without the World's Parliament of Religions, 1893. He had uprooted once and for all, all the Western prejudices against Hinduism. Well, many people, Western or Indian, still continue to be prejudiced, but one cannot ignore the fact that Swamiji's participation in the Parliament for the first time opened the doors for the West to receive Indian wisdom on an equal footing. This explains the positive reception of Vedanta among people of the Western countries.

Many scholars have argued in different ways that it was Swamiji, who was responsible for projecting a unified Hinduism to the West, while nothing of that kind really existed in pre-colonial India. There have been some refutations of the position that the idea of a unified Hinduism was born in colonial India. For instance, David Lorenzen claimed that 'a Hindu religion theologically and devotionally grounded in texts such as the *Bhagavad-gita*, the Puranas, and philosophical commentaries on the six *darsanas* gradually acquired a much sharper self-conscious identity through the rivalry between Muslims and Hindus in the period between 1200 and 1500 and was firmly established long before 1800'.²⁰ Andrew Nicholson has also argued that between 'the twelfth and sixteenth centuries CE, certain thinkers began to treat as a single whole the diverse philosophical teachings of the Upaniṣads, epics, Purāṇas, and the schools known retrospectively as the "six systems" (*saddarśana*) of mainstream Hindu philosophy.... After this late medieval period, it became almost universally accepted that there was a fixed group of Indian philosophies in basic agreement with one another and standing together against Buddhism and Jainism'.²¹ Some others, including me, feel that a unifying thrust within Hinduism can be identified from a much earlier period, from the Vedic period, or at least from the time of Acharya Shankara. Much work remains to be done on the early history of Hinduism from these perspectives.

This is not to deny that the name 'Hinduism' is of modern origin. But as Swamiji had pointed out in the context of Hindu 'idolatry': 'Names are not explanations'.²² Wendy Doniger writes: 'The name "Hinduism" was indeed of recent and European construction, but it is Eurocentric to assume that when we made the name we made the game. "Hinduism" ... is, like the armadillo, part hedgehog, part tortoise. Yet there *are* armadillos, and they were there before they had names ... religions are messy. It has proved convenient for us to call this corpus of concepts Hinduism; naming is always a matter of the convenience of the namers, and *all* categories are constructed'.²³ I have argued elsewhere²⁴ that the 'constructionist'²⁵ arguments about Hinduism have some flaws: namely, many of them base their arguments exclusively on observations on the colonial period;²⁶ there are also a lot of conceptual problems like trying to judge pre-modern phenomena within the framework of modern concepts;²⁷ we also need to think more deeply about our conception of religion.

The second far-reaching consequence of the Parliament was expressed by Swamiji himself in the following words: 'The Parliament of Religions was a failure from the Christian standpoint ... But the Chicago Parliament was a tremendous success for India and Indian thought. It helped on the tide of Vedanta, which is flooding the world. The American people—of course, *minus* the fanatical priests and Church-women—are very glad of the results of the Parliament'.²⁸ But this exclamation of joy for Vedanta, Hinduism, and India was not from a narrow, sectarian, exclusive point of view. Swamiji's positing of Vedanta has often been misapprehended in this respect. If the Parliament 'unintentionally turned out to be a revelation of the plurality of forces', then Swamiji's participation in the Parliament was indeed a turning point in the history of religious

pluralism. Most of the lectures relevant to my argument were of course delivered later, but the Parliament nonetheless paved the way for the presentation of such views before a large public.

Jyotirmaya Sharma argues that Swamiji's so-called religious pluralism is, in reality, no pluralism at all, and that he, in fact, argued for a kind of Hindu supremacy.²⁹ For Andrew Nicholson, Swamiji was both a Hindu supremacist and an inclusivist. Nicholson cites the example of the Christian theologian Karl Rahner, who proposed the famous theory of 'anonymous Christians'.³⁰ According to Makarand Paranjape, Swamiji was both a pluralist and an inclusivist: 'When he faced other religions, he advocated pluralism, but did believe that Vedanta was the prototype of pluralism so came with that natural advantage; when he confronted other Hindu and Indic traditions, he was inclusivist in that he advocated the suitability of Vedanta over other paths, especially for modern times'.³¹

I argue that Swamiji was neither a supremacist nor an inclusivist, and that he was a pluralist, but the Christian theological paradigm of pluralism may not be adequate in understanding his pluralism.³² His views should be understood in their own terms and not with the help of etic categories. It should be noted that Swamiji equated Vedanta with the teachings of the Upanishads, and not exclusively with the philosophical school that goes by that name.³³ I also argue that for him *advaita* was the *ideal* of non-dualism, not the philosophical school of Advaita Vedanta.³⁴ On this ground, he cannot be accused of supremacism or exclusivism. Furthermore, unlike the Christian inclusivist theologians, he never claimed that all salvation received was eventually received only through a Hindu incarnation. Christian theological inclusivism is in fact a benign, and even patronising, form of exclusivism. He did *not* advocate 'the suitability of Vedanta over other

paths'; what he in fact did was to show that Vedanta, that is, Upanishadic teachings, is the underlying basis of developments within Hinduism; perhaps he would have added, even when one did not explicitly draw from the Upanishads.

Two of Sister Nivedita's observations are relevant at this point. 'The Hindu world in its entirety then, is one with the highest philosophy of Hinduism. The much-talked-of Vedanta is only the theoretic aspect of that synthesis whose elements make up the common life. The most unlettered, idolatrous-seeming peasant will talk, if questioned, of the immanence of God'.³⁵ I would like to reiterate a point that I have made earlier and that others are also making—it is time to move beyond a narrow sectarian view of Vedanta or Advaita. Secondly, referring to Swamiji's lectures in London in 1896, Nivedita wrote:

He had come to us as a missionary of the Hindu belief in the Immanent God and he called upon us to realise the truth of his gospel for ourselves. Neither then, nor at any aftertime, did I ever hear him advocate to his audience any specialized form of religion. He would refer freely enough to the Indian sects ... by way of illustration of what he had to say. But he never preached anything but that philosophy which, to Indian thinking, underlies all creeds. He never quoted anything but the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. And he never in public mentioned his own Master, nor spoke in specific terms of any part of Hindu mythology (1.23).

The fact about Swamiji trying to highlight the underlying basis of Hinduism is also borne out by his 'Paper on Hinduism' at the Parliament. This lecture was precisely an attempt to answer the question about the underlying basis of an internally diverse religion:

From the high spiritual flights of the Vedanta philosophy, of which the latest discoveries of science seem like echoes, to the low ideas of idolatry with its multifarious mythology, the

agnosticism of the Buddhists, and the atheism of the Jains, each and all have a place in the Hindu's religion. Where then, the question arises, where is the common centre to which all these widely diverging radii converge? Where is the common basis upon which all these seemingly hopeless contradictions rest? And this is the question I shall attempt to answer.³⁶

Swamiji believed in intra-religious as well as inter-religious pluralism; and as I argued above, his employment of the category of Vedanta is completely different from what has been perceived as his 'privileging' of Vedanta, therefore it is not an impediment to his pluralism. Vedanta is not one of the competing 'religions'. It is that spiritual ideal which he and many sees both within and outside Hinduism—who may not even use the name Vedanta—have recognised as the highest, but not in any exclusive or sectarian sense. 'Vedanta' just happens to be the name of this ideal. I argue that with Swamiji it is a supra concept that illuminates the very purpose and being of religion. It is in this sense, that there is no competition between a Hindu and somebody else. Not merely that the 'Christian is not to become a Hindu or a Buddhist, nor a Hindu or a Buddhist to become a Christian' (1.24), but, as pointed out by Nivedita: 'One of the great destinies that I foresee is that the Vedanta philosophy will give to Europe a rejustification for religious belief with regard to Christianity. Christian doctrine in Europe has been abandoned. We are, as it were, in a dilemma. The Indian mind will help us out of this dilemma.'³⁷ And it is in this sense that Swamiji's assertion at the Parliament stands true:

If there is ever to be a universal religion, it must be one which will have no location in place or time; which will be infinite like the God it will preach, and whose sun will shine upon the followers of Krishna and of Christ, on saints and sinners alike; which will not be Brahminic or

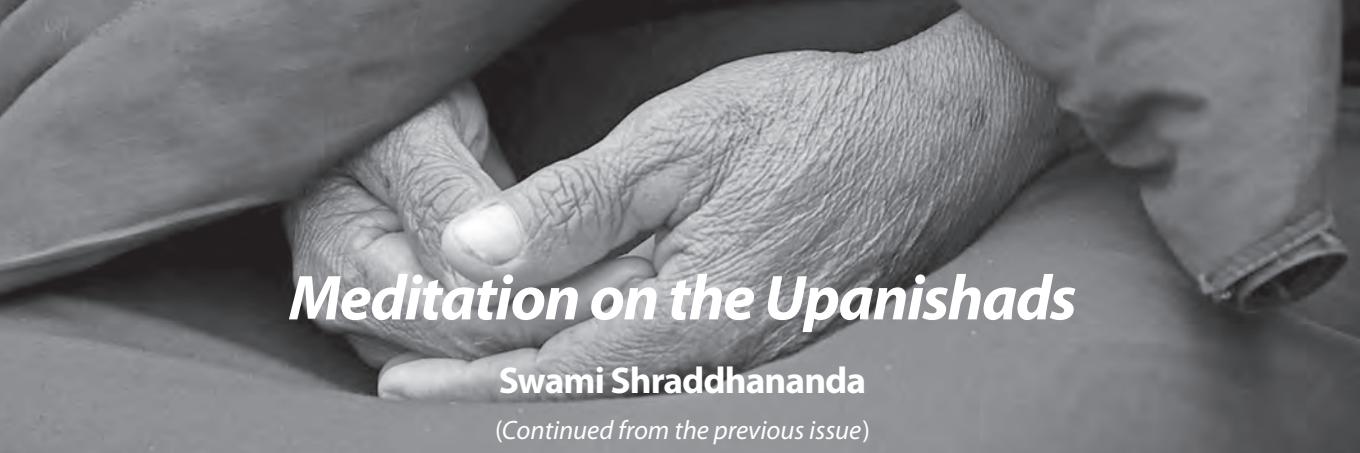
Buddhistic, Christian or Mohammedan, but the sum total of all these, and still have infinite space for development; which in its catholicity will embrace in its infinite arms, and find a place for, every human being, from the lowest grovelling savage not far removed from the brute, to the highest man towering by the virtues of his head and heart almost above humanity, making society stand in awe of him and doubt his human nature. It will be a religion which will have no place for persecution or intolerance in its polity, which will recognise divinity in every man and woman, and whose whole scope, whose whole force, will be created in aiding humanity to realise its own true, divine nature.³⁸



Notes and References

1. *The Dawn of Religious Pluralism: Voices from the World's Parliament of Religions, 1893*, ed Richard Hughes Seager (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1993) is a selection of speeches made at the Parliament.
2. The World's Columbian Exposition was planned to commemorate the four-hundredth anniversary of the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus. The idea was to hold a giant exposition of 'the arts, industries, manufactures and the products of soil, mine and sea'.
3. Neely's *History of the Parliament of Religions and Religious Congresses at the World's Columbian Exposition*, ed. Walter R Houghton (Chicago: Frank Tennyson Neely, 1893), 15.
4. Charles C Bonney, 'The Genesis of the World's Religious Congresses of 1893', originally published in *The New-Church Review*, 1/1 (January 1894), 73–100; reprinted in George F Dole, *With Absolute Respect: The Swedenborgian Theology of Charles Carroll Bonney* (West Chester: Swedenborg Foundation, 1993).
5. *Judaism at the World's Parliament of Religions* (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke, 1894), xxi.
6. Charles C Bonney, 'The World's Parliament of Religions', *The Monist*, 5/3 (April 1895), 321–44; 325.
7. Egal Feldman, 'American Ecumenism: Chicago's World's Parliament of Religions of 1893', *Journal of Church and State*, 9/2 (Spring 1967), 180–99.

8. Cited in Donald H Bishop, 'Religious Confrontation, A Case Study: The 1893 Parliament of Religions', *Numen*, 16/1 (April 1969), 63.
9. 'The World's Parliament of Religions', 324.
10. 'Religious Confrontation, A Case Study', 63.
11. Makarand Paranjape is right in pointing out that generally this threefold typology is attributed to Alan Race (See Alan Race, *Christians and Religious Pluralism: Patterns in the Christian Theology of Religions* (London: SCM, 1993), but Bishop had used it before him. See Makarand Paranjape, Lecture at Doshi Conference, 'Vedanta: Its Many Manifestations Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow', Loyola Marymount University, 16 June 2013; published in Makarand Paranjape, 'Swami Vivekananda and Indian Secularism', in *On World Religions: Diversity, Not Dissension*, ed. Anindita Balslev (New Delhi: Sage, 2014), 232.
12. David Mislin, *Saving Faith: Making Religious Pluralism an American Value at the Dawn of the Secular Age* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2015), 57.
13. Christians and Religious Pluralism, 3.
14. Richard Hughes Seager, *The World's Parliament of Religions: The East/West Encounter, Chicago, 1893* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1995), xxix.
15. See *New York Tribune*, 12 May 1900, 8.
16. See Robert Hume, 'Introduction', John Henry Barrows, 'Barrows Lectures 1896–7: Christianity, the World-religion—Lectures Delivered in India', (Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1897), 1.
17. See John Henry Barrows, *Christianity the World-religion: Lectures Delivered in India and Japan* (Chicago: A C McClurg, 1897).
18. John Henry Barrows, *The Christian Conquest of Asia: Studies and Personal Observations of Oriental Religions* (New York: Scribner, 1899), 62.
19. See *His Eastern and Western Disciples, The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, 2 vols (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2008), 2.260–7.
20. David Lorenzen, *Who Invented Hinduism? Essays on Religion in History* (New Delhi: Yoda, 2006), 2.
21. Andrew J Nicholson, *Unifying Hinduism: Philosophy and Identity in Indian Intellectual History* (New York: Columbia University, 2010), 2–3.
22. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 9 vols (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1–8, 1989; 9, 1997), 1.15.
23. Wendy Doniger, 'Hinduism by Any Other Name', *Wilson Quarterly* 15/3 (Summer 1991), 36.
24. See Arpita Mitra, 'Historiography (Hinduism)', *Hinduism and Tribal Religions*, eds Pankaj Jain, Rita Sherma, Madhu Khanna (Dordrecht: Springer, 2018).
25. The argument that Hinduism is a social construction and a product of colonial knowledge production with no existence prior to the nineteenth century.
26. For instance, see Vasudha Dalmia, 'The Only Real Religion of the Hindus': Vaiṣṇava Self-representation in the Late Nineteenth Century', *The Oxford India Hinduism Reader*, eds Vasudha Dalmia and Heinrich von Stietencron (New Delhi: Oxford University, 2007).
27. I argue that this is a problem Heinrich von Stietencron, among others, is guilty of. For details, see 'Historiography (Hinduism)', *Hinduism and Tribal Religions*.
28. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 5.211.
29. See Jyotirmaya Sharma, *Cosmic Love and Human Apathy: Swami Vivekananda's Restatement of Religion* (New Delhi: Harper Collins, 2013).
30. See Andrew Nicholson, 'Vivekananda's Non-Dual Ethics in the History of Vedānta', *Swami Vivekananda: New Reflections on His Life, Legacy and Influence*, eds Rita D Sherma and James McHugh (Dordrecht: Springer, forthcoming).
31. Makarand Paranjape, Lecture at Doshi Conference, 'Vedanta: Its Many Manifestations Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow'.
32. I offer a detailed discussion of this issue in the fourth chapter of my forthcoming monograph *Beyond Neo-Vedanta: Revisiting the Debate on Swami Vivekananda*.
33. See *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 3.395.
34. I am aware that the debate on Swamiji's Vedanta is far more complex. For want of space, I have only briefly outlined my views here without elaborating on them. I engage with this issue in greater detail in my monograph cited above.
35. *The Complete Works of Sister Nivedita*, 5 vols (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1995), 2.131.
36. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 1.6.
37. *Complete Works of Sister Nivedita*, 5.245.
38. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 1.19.



Meditation on the Upanishads

Swami Shraddhananda

(Continued from the previous issue)

THE FIRST PROPOSITION is that God is everything and everything is God. Just as the mind reveals sattva, friendship, compassion, and love, it also reveals rajas and tamas. The mind is really moving us and we are its slaves. The person meditating tries to watch the mind just as if one is observing a flower garden. Sometimes the mind is in a *sattvic* state, then again, a *rajasic* state, and also a *tamasic* mood. Think that God has entered into the mind and is manifesting the mind. These three manifestations of the states, or gunas, of the mind are coming from God. On the practical level we say sattva is good, rajas is no good, and tamas is terrible—but that is on the practical level. Here, all the thoughts and all that make up the mind are *saguna* Brahman.

Start with the mind and see that all thoughts and all that make up the mind are God's play. If we bring God into our mind and our body, then they become illumined. When we see an inanimate object such as an altar, what do we see? How will a real devotee view the altar? That altar becomes as something living because the idea of consciousness has come to the mind of the devotee. It is like when a devotee goes on a pilgrimage, visits a holy place and bows down. Of course the devotee will bow down. After all, it is a holy place and not a casino. In this meditation, if we think that it is God who has entered the mind, even when that mind is turbulent, then the mind will be our spiritual

companion. Meditate on the mind as the great mind of God. Try to feel the divine presence in the mind. When we see wonderful beauties of nature, we think of God. But here we are trying to see the glory of the phenomena of the mind. It is much more wonderful. This beautiful mind is guiding the body. It is a wonderful storehouse filled with God, who has filled the universe. That God has entered into the mind. All is happening because of God. Think of Brahman as filling the mind. We see wonderful phenomena in our mind and we try to fix God there. Then our mind is filled with God.

Next, we come to the meditation on prana, the vital energies. Prana carries on all the life activities. All of these vital systems are continuing because it is God who has entered our body. This prana is guided and controlled by God. We can feel God's presence. We can touch our heart and hear the *tup-tup-tup*, which is God's voice. From the highest heavens, now has descended into our bloodstream and heartbeat. The devotee tries to feel this presence in all the physiological processes that are going on in this body. 'I am the fire that is in your stomach'—the Bhagavadgita says it is God.¹⁵ A devotee has to practise this meditation. More and more, we have to feel the presence of God in everything. A time will come when we will be able to see the presence of God in everything, even in terrible things. We start with our own body, because that is the thing dearest to us. If someone

says, 'I love you more than my own life', that is a lie. No one loves anyone more than they love themselves. A spiritual seeker, more and more, has to include God into everything. Then one day we will be able to really feel that '*sarvam khalvidam brahma*; the entire universe is Brahman.'¹⁶

Class 14: Rasa, the Juice of Life

The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* declares that Purusha, the cosmic soul, has entered into all different bodies. One day the mind is wearing a happy mask and the next day it is wearing a sad mask. When we are identified with our body, emotions, and mind, our individuality is constantly changing. The holiday of Halloween is very relevant to Vedanta. The soul is all the time playing Halloween and wearing masks. We have passed through so many lives, so many masks, and so many cultural customs. This play with so many masks is fun sometimes, no doubt, but in comparison with our real Self, it is nothing.

The Self is the totality. The sense of existence, knowledge, and joy comes from the Self. Our constant companion is our own truth. The Self is the ground of our very existence. It is our Self that is appearing as a dog or a cat or a man or a woman. It seems like it is something that is very difficult to comprehend: 'I am the Purusha, the cosmic soul.'

The Self is often described as ananda, joy or blessedness. We may think of speech and mind as the most important things in life, but we give too much importance to them. We should never forget this fundamental point of Advaita Vedanta when we say the Self is this or that. These may be necessary steps, but we should remember that these are only steps. These steps will lead us to our true Self.

In the *Taittiriya Upanishad* the Self is described as rasa—juice, sweetness, joy. Our Self is the juice of everything. Anything that exists has to wear a label of existence. Whatever exists is also a piece of knowledge, a bit of that light of

knowledge. When our experiences are grounded in our particular likes and dislikes, we cannot experience this joy. If our mind is troubled with selfish thoughts, we cannot experience this joy.

The Upanishad continues on about the fundamental joy that is like the vast sky. We love life because at the back of everything there is joy pouring into us. That joy is like akasha, vast space surrounding us. That joy of Brahman can come to us through all our senses. It is joy that is upholding us. A time will come when we should think, 'Now that I have no responsibilities, I can really go into the depths of spiritual life, dive deep and ponder these truths.'

In the last chapter of the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, the discussion is about ananda, bliss. It is ananda that is making it possible for us to live. All beings are really sustained by ananda, but it is difficult to understand. Forget these names and forms and just concentrate on the light of knowledge, like a million-watt light bulb. Our mind must become free from likes and dislikes. We should try to be aware of that natural joy that is pouring into us all the time, like a kind of radiation from outer space. Always see that it is the same Purusha emanating from everything and everybody. When our likes and dislikes are dissolved we will be open to absorb that joy. Then whatever exists is just like a radioactive substance—emanating knowledge.

Satchidananda is really pieces of knowledge. Really speaking, there is a basic sweetness to them. There is juice everywhere, but we have to prepare our mind and emotions to receive it. We like to live not for life itself, but for that juice of life. If it were not for rasa, what would sustain us? We should meditate on rasa as the one basic existence.

(To be continued)

References

15. Gita, 15.14.

16. *Chandogya Upanishad*, 3.14.1.

BALABODHA

Ancient Wisdom Made Easy

Danam

THE WORD *danam* is a commonly used Sanskrit word. It is used by people, who do not even know Sanskrit, as it is present in almost every Indian language. The widely used meaning of the word *danam* is charity, but it is necessary to see the other meanings and the origins of this word. This is a Sanskrit word. Sanskrit is a classical language like Greek, Latin, and Persian. And in Sanskrit, as in most classical languages, most words are derived from a stem or root.

The word *danam* is derived by adding the suffix *lyut* to the root verb *da*, which means to give, bestow, grant, yield, impart, present, offer, give in marriage, hand over, give back, pay, give up, cede, sell, communicate, teach, utter, speak, permit, allow, place, put, apply, or add. *Danam* means the act of giving, giving in marriage, giving up, communicating, imparting, teaching, delivering, handing over, gift, donation, present, liberality, charity, munificence, bribery for overcoming one's enemy, cutting, dividing, purification, cleaning, protection, pasture, addition, distribution of food, distribution of a Vedic sacrificial meal, part, possession, share, paying back, restoring, oblation, the rut-fluid that flows from an elephant's temples, distributor, dispenser, straighten, be straight, nourishing, cherishing, beating, striking, or wild honey. *Danam* could also mean destroying; cleaning of a lamp; coarseness; stimulating; kindling; setting on fire; the excretory fluids like phlegm, vomit, and urine; giving to gods, priests, and teachers; renunciation; letting loose; dismiss; discard; abandon; throw; desert; relaxing; emit; evacuate; discharge; answer; cast; shoot; drive

out; produce; give away; handle; afflict; affect; act upon; touch; air; wind; sensitive nerve; sensation; contact; putting in; commence; beginning; stating; causing to attain; claim; appoint; inauguration; worldly conduct; accomplish; illustrate; explain; sprinkle; that by which a sacrificial offering is made; scatter; pour out; completion; final emancipation or beatitude; illness; trouble; distress; anxiety; inheritance; retirement; precept; dejection; laying aside; suspending; a general rule; resignation; quitting; setting free; a ceremony on the suspending of the repetition of the Vedas; excreting; end; killing; the colon-like sign in Devanagari; shedding; light; splendour; hurling; offspring; sun's southern course; opening; getting rid of; creation; destruction of the world; cause; hurting; injuring; or slaughter.

Danam is giving with *shraddha*, faith and sincerity, when a worthy recipient has arrived. Both the giver and the accepter should have *shraddha* and should follow dharma. The giver should maintain both external and internal purity while giving the *danam*. The amount of wealth that is gifted is immaterial, however less it might be. The wealth being given in *danam* should be without any encumbrances, should have been earned by one's own efforts in a righteous manner. *Danam* should not be given to a person, who is unwilling to accept it.

Danam that is given following dharma, is considered to be the best and purest form of worshipping the gods. It is also considered a means to cure one of illnesses, to be done along with treatment by a physician. One has to give *danam* with *shraddha*, and should not give it without *shraddha*.

TRADITIONAL TALES

The Glory of the Gift of Food



THAT CITY WAS NAMED Satyapuri. It was unique and different from the neighbouring cities. Its uniqueness came from the ancient huge Shiva temple it had. The temple administrator, Vishvanatha was highly disciplined and very devoted. His wife matched his character and was herself righteous. The astrologers, who charted Vishvanatha's horoscope on his birth, said: 'This is the last birth of this child. He will renounce after fathering a child. He will get the knowledge of Brahman in his monastic life. Let not any relative stop him when he would decide to renounce. Such attempts would be in vain. Let him have his way.'

Vishvanatha acted like a physician with a cure for hunger. He tirelessly gifted food to all the poor and underprivileged people who approached him. By God's grace, he had enough wealth to do so. His work of gifting food did not face any obstacle. That couple had a child. They named him Gunashila. One night, Vishvanatha had a dream, in which he saw that Lord Shiva, who resides in Varanasi, called him and initiated him into the vows of sannyasa, and told him:

'Come! You belong to me. You are my wealth. Come to me soon.'

Vishvanatha performed his duties righteously, without fail. His following of *svadharma*, duties that he himself had chosen, gave him great maturity. It was as though that the dream had lifted up a veil from his mind. He proceeded towards Varanasi to become a monk. Even after he left, his wife continued the gift of food without any defect, though that posed many difficulties. One day the boy Gunashila asked his mother: 'Mother! Why do you give these gifts of food throughout the day? By gifting food in this manner, would we not lose the little wealth that we have and would we not die of starvation?' His mother replied: 'Son! I don't know the reason. Your father gave the gift of food for many years with complete dedication, just like we are doing now. I am continuing it just because he liked it, that is all.'

This set Gunashila thinking and he said to his mother: 'The ancestors have said that every action produces a result. If that be so, the gift of food should also have a result, is it not? I will find out what that result is by going to the forest

and performing severe austerities there.' His mother tied into a bundle the food and other things that Gunashila might need. Gunashila circumambulated his mother thrice, saluted her, and received her blessings. Then, he proceeded towards the forest with the bundle his mother had given. On the way he met a hungry old man. Was he not born in a family known for its gift of food? He gave his bundle of food to the old man and continued his journey.

It became dusk. As it had become dark, Gunashila could not continue his journey any more. He was confused and stood there in the middle of the forest, thinking, 'Now, what should I do?' At that moment, a hunter appeared there and told Gunashila: 'O child! Why are you standing at this late hour in this forest where many fierce animals prowl? You can be put in danger any moment by these wild animals.' Gunashila replied: 'Sir! I have come here with my mother's permission to do austerities and find out the greatness of the gift of food. I have to go much farther.' The hunter said: 'Your aim is alright. However, to save yourself from the fierce animals, you can stay with me this night, and can continue your journey tomorrow.' Saying thus, the hunter took Gunashila to his home.

The hunter was a good person. His wife, though, was the straight opposite to him. She became visibly angry seeing her husband bring a boy with him. She cried in rage: 'What! Have you

brought a guest when there is not sufficient food even for us? It is great indeed!' The hunter said: 'It does not matter. You don't need to bother. I will share my part of the food with the boy.' The hunter did as he said and all three had their meal. It was the practice of the hunter and his wife to sleep in a treehouse to protect them from the fierce animals. The hunter took Gunashila also to the treehouse and made him lie between him and his wife. However, his wife grumbled: 'This boy cannot lie besides me. You give me half of the treehouse and you and the boy may share the other half?' The hunter was greatly pained by his wife's behaviour. He lied between his wife and the boy. The hunter held Gunashila tight lest he should fall down and remained awake without sleep.

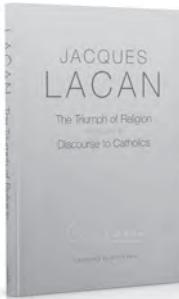
In the middle of the night, when the hunter's wife and Gunashila were in deep sleep, the hunter switched places with Gunashila and lay on one side with Gunashila between him and his wife. The hunter fell asleep immediately. Waking up in deep night, the hunter's wife thought: 'I have to get rid of this boy, who has become a bother now.' Since it was dark, she did not see that her husband was lying on the far side and that it was Gunashila who was lying beside her. Mistaking her husband to be Gunashila, she slowly pushed him and made him fall down. She was very happy on doing so. The wild animals killed the hunter on his fall.

(To be continued)



REVIEWS

For review in PRABUDDHA BHARATA,
publishers need to send **two** copies of their latest publications



The Triumph of Religion

Preceded by

Discourse to Catholics

Jacques Lacan

Trans. Bruce Fink

Polity Press, 65 Bridge Street, Cambridge CB2 1UR, UK. www.politybooks.com. 2013. \$45. viii + 92 pp. HB.
ISBN 9780745659893.

Psychoanalysis and its father in the West, Sigmund Freud, have often been seen as the antitheses of religion and faith. This book seeks to dispel this misconception and place Freud and psychoanalysis as hopes to the faithful and the hedonist alike. Ethics and morality do not get compromised and unethical and immoral behaviour do not get free licence under Freud's teachings. The result of two lectures and one interview of Jacques Lacan, this book is a timely addition to the English literature on and by Lacan as it gives hope to the many psychoanalysts long caught in the dilemma of choosing religion or psychoanalysis primarily because of the either/or dichotomy between these two choices as presented by scholars of either field.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part 'Discourse to Catholics' includes two lectures—given on 9 and 10 March, 1960, in Brussels, at the invitation of the Faculté Universitaire Saint-Louis' (vii). The second part 'The Triumph of Religion' is 'from a press conference held in Rome on October 29, 1974, at the French Cultural Center, when Lacan was ... interviewed by Italian journalists' (ibid.). The first part of this book is divided into two sections, 'Regarding Ethics, Freud Has What It Takes' and 'Can Psychoanalysis Constitute the Kind of Ethics Necessitated by our Times?'

As mentioned in the 'Lecture Announcement', Lacan shows us that even libertines have

the freedom 'to recognize the voice of the Father in the commandments his Death left intact' (4). He clears the objective of his lecture in the very beginning by saying that he would not defend psychoanalysis or stress its 'therapeutic nature' (5). He considers this lecture more of a 'teaching ... focused explicitly on ... the ethical impact of psychoanalysis' (6). Lacan starts his discussion by stating that the real and the rational are essentially the inverse and converse of the same principle and that both have 'a reassuring compatibility' (8). He questions the 'creed of stupidities' (ibid.) that positions the ego, consciousness, evolution, and behaviour in order to explain the growth and tensions of human beings. He considers that these hypotheses mask the reality that 'nothing in the concrete life of a single individual allows us to ground the idea that such a finality directs his life and could lead him—through the pathways of progressive self-consciousness undergirded by natural development—to harmony with himself as well as to approval from the world on which his happiness depends' (9).

Evidently, Lacan does not want to adopt a reductionist approach or make an oversimplification of the progressive human 'pathways'. According to him, the human being, driven by desire, when incapable of achieving it, becomes unhappy, and languishes in anguish. He asserts that the human being is 'ever more impotent to meet up anew with his own desire, and this impotence can go so far that he loses its carnal triggering' (10). In his expert manner, Lacan destroys the one-solution-for-all approach to the psychology of desires because desire 'is no simple thing. It is neither elementary, nor animalistic, nor especially inferior. It is the result, composition, or complex of an entire articulation' (ibid.). He also quashes the 'genetic psychoanalysis' that portrays desire as 'the figurative reproduction of primal concrete experiences' (11). He makes an urgent call that desire 'insofar

as it appears in Freud's work as a new object for ethical reflection—must be resituated within the context of Freud's intentions' (*ibid.*). A rereading of Freud can only be possible through Lacan and though Freudian psychoanalysis has been often condemned as wrong, one can arrive at a firm conclusion about Freud's accuracy of thought only after understanding his thought in his own perspective. As Lacan puts it, 'a meaning is born from a set of letters or words only insofar as it presents itself as a modification of their already received usage' (13).

Quoting St Paul, Lacan attempts to prove that belief, no matter how sincere it might be, cannot and should not be excluded from 'the examination of those who are attached to knowledge' (18). Lacan declares that everyone 'knows that Freud was a crude materialist' (20). Everyone also knows that Freud considered religion to be an illusion. Lacan, however, believed that 'true religion ... would take in everyone in the end' (Jacques-Alain Miller, back cover). Lacan believes that 'Freud is far closer than he allows to the Christian commandment "Love thy neighbor as thyself"' (32). Lacan's religious and Christian reading of Freud integrates reason and psychoanalysis into faith-traditions.

Lacan points out to us 'the topological chains that situate at the heart of each of us the gaping place from which the nothing questions us about our sex and our existence. This is the place where we have to love the neighbor as ourselves, because in him this place is the same' (47). To express the idea that 'nothing is closer to us than this place' (*ibid.*), Lacan quotes the surrealist and symbolist French poet Germain Nouveau, who wrote under the pseudonym Humilis. Even the English translation of this poet is captivating: 'Brother, who makes blood-red wine from golden grapes / Love thyself, as the vine loves its garden clusters' (49). Here we find a resonance of the famous statement of Yajnavalkya: 'It is not for the sake of the husband, my dear, that he is loved, but for one's own sake that he is loved' (*Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, 4.5.6.).

It is vital to study Lacan to understand Freud from a completely novel perspective that would free the average reader from the vicious colouring

that comes with most Freudian scholarship. And this book is a good place to start the study of Lacan. Of course, his *Seminars* are seminal (See <<http://www.lacan.com/seminarsia.htm>> accessed 13 August 2018). The radical and too broad a thinker Slavoj Žižek maintains that to understand Lacan we need to read both his *écrits* or written theoretical texts, and seminars. Žižek says: 'If you go directly to the *écrits*, you won't get anything, so you should start—but not stop—with seminars since, if you read nothing but the seminars, you also won't get it' (Slavoj Žižek, *How to Read Lacan* (London: Granta, 2006), 129). The second part of the book under review, *The Triumph of Religion* is ample proof that it is vital to read Lacan's interviews to have a clearer understanding of his thought.

For instance, Lacan locates the untenability of the psychoanalyst to Freud himself and argues that though 'it isn't necessary to educate man' since he 'gets his education all by himself' (56), nonetheless 'a certain amount of education is necessary in order for men to manage to stand each other' (57). He gives a quite succinct definition of the real, a quite philosophical definition too: 'The real is the difference between what works and what doesn't work. What works is the world. The real is what doesn't work' (61).

Lacan equates the psychoanalyst with the clergy or the confessor. However, he is sure that religion 'does not triumph by means of confession. If psychoanalysis won't triumph over religion it is because religion is invincible' (64). This is so because we 'can't even begin to imagine how powerful religion is' (*ibid.*). Lacan is highly biased towards Christianity and says: 'There is one true religion and that is the Christian religion' (66). He is prophetic about his own influence: 'In very short order, you will see, you will encounter Lacan on every corner. Just like Freud! Everyone imagines he has read Freud because Freud is everywhere ... That will happen to me too' (71).

For anyone interested in religion and psychoanalysis, particularly for the psychoanalysts of the religious, this book would serve as a guidepost.

Editor

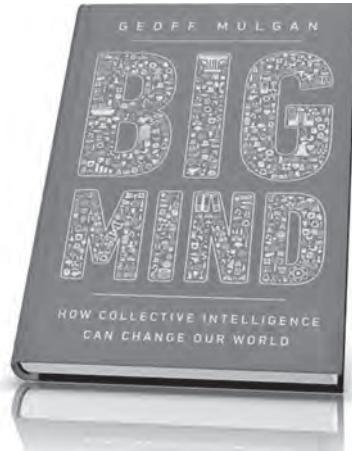
Prabuddha Bharata

MANANA

**Exploring thought-currents from around the world.
Extracts from a thought-provoking book every month.**

**Big Mind:
How Collective Intelligence Can
Change Our World**
Geoff Mulgan

Princeton University Press, 41 William Street, Princeton, New Jersey 08540. 2018. viii + 272 pp. \$29.95. HB. ISBN 9780691170794.



THREE ARE LIBRARIES FULL OF BOOKS on individual intelligence, investigating where it comes from, how it manifests, and whether it's one thing or many. Over many years, I've been interested in a less studied field. Working in governments and charities, businesses and movements, I've been fascinated by the question of why some organizations seem so much smarter than others—better able to navigate the uncertain currents of the world around them. Even more fascinating are the examples of organizations full of clever people and expensive technology that nevertheless act in stupid and self-destructive ways.

I looked around for the theories and studies that would make sense of this, but found little available. And so I observed, assessed, and drew up hypotheses.

Digital technologies can sometimes dumb people down. But they have the virtue of making thought processes visible. Someone has to program how software will process information, sensors will gather data, or memories will be stored. All of us living in a more pervasively digital age, and those of us who have to think digitally for our work, are inevitably more sensitive to how intelligence is organized, where perhaps in another era we might have thought it a fact of nature, magical, and mysterious.

The field that led me has sometimes been given the label *collective intelligence*. In its narrow variants, it's mainly concerned with how groups of people collaborate together online. In its broader variants it's about how all kinds of intelligence happen on large scales. At its extreme, it encompasses the whole of human civilization and culture, which constitutes the collective intelligence of our species, passed down imperfectly through books and schools, lectures and demonstrations, or by parents showing children how to sit still, eat, or get dressed in the morning.

My interest is less ambitious than this. I'm concerned with the space between the individual and the totality of civilization—an equivalent to the space in biology between individual organisms and the whole biosphere. Just as it makes sense to study particular ecologies—lakes, deserts, and forests—so it also makes sense to study the systems of intelligence that operate at this middle level, in individual organizations, sectors, or fields.

Within this space, my primary interest is narrow still: How do societies, governments, or governing systems solve complex problems, or to put it another way, how do collective problems find collective solutions?

Individual neurons only become useful when they're connected to billions of other neurons. In a similar way, the linking up of people and

machines makes possible dramatic jumps in collective intelligence. When this happens, the whole can be much more than the sum of its parts.

Our challenge is to understand how to do this well; how to avoid drowning in a sea of data or being deafened by the noise of too much irrelevant information; how to use technologies to amplify our minds rather than constrain them in predictable ruts.

What follows in this book is a combination of description and theory that aims to guide design and action. Its central claim is that every individual, organization, or group could thrive more successfully if it tapped into a bigger mind—drawing on the brainpower of other people and machines. There are already some three billion people connected online and over five billion connected machines. But making the most of them requires careful attention to methods, avoidance of traps, and investment of scarce resources. As is the case with the links between neurons in our brain, successful thought depends on structure and organization, not just the number of connections or signals.

This may be more obvious in the near future. Children growing up in the twenty-first century take it for granted that they are surrounded by sensors and social media, and their participation in overlapping group minds—hives, crowds, and clubs—makes the idea that intelligence resides primarily in the space inside the human skull into an odd anachronism. Some feel comfortable living far more open and transparent lives than their parents, much more part of the crowd than apart.

The great risk in their lifetimes, though, is that collective intelligence won't keep up with artificial intelligence. As a result, they may live in a future where extraordinarily smart artificial intelligence sits amid often-inept systems for making the decisions that matter most.

To avoid that fate we need clear thinking. For example, it was once assumed that crowds were by their nature dangerous, deluded, and cruel. More recently the pendulum swung to an opposite assumption: that crowds tend to be wise. The trust is subtler. There are now innumerable examples that show the gains from mobilizing more people to take part in observation, analysis, and problem solving. But crowds, whether online or offline, can also be foolish and biased, or overconfident echo chambers. Within any group, diverging and conflicting interests make any kind of collective intelligence both a tool for cooperation and a site for competition, deception, and manipulation.

Taking advantage of the possibilities of a bigger mind can also bring stark vulnerabilities for us as individuals. We may, and often will, find our skills and knowledge quickly superseded by intelligent machines. If our data and lives become visible, we can more easily be exploited by powerful predators.

For institutions, the rising importance of conscious collective intelligence is no less challenging, and demands a different view of boundaries and roles. Every organization needs to become more aware of how it learns from action: correcting errors, sometimes creating new categories when the old ones don't work, and sometimes developing entirely new ways of thinking. Every organization has to find the right position between the silence and the noise: the silence of the old hierarchies in which no one dared to challenge or warn, and the noisy cacophony of a world of networks flooded by an infinity of voices. That space in between becomes meaningful only when organizations learn how to select and cluster with the right levels of granularity—simple enough but not simplistic; clear but not crude; focused but not to the extent of myopia. Few of our dominant institutions are adept at thinking in these ways.



REPORTS



Inauguration of Week-long Celebrations at Chennai Vidyapith

Celebration of the 150th Birth Anniversary of Sister Nivedita

The following centres conducted the programmes mentioned against their names: **Asansol**: (i) Cultural competitions, 1,412 students from 11 schools participated. The winners were awarded prizes in a programme held on 22 February 2018 attended by about 600 students. (ii) A discourse by Swami Suvirananda, General Secretary, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, on 24 March attended by nearly 600 devotees. **Bagda**: A students' convention on 24 March in which about 250 students and teachers, mainly from tribal communities, took part. **Gadadhar Ashrama**: Two students' conventions on 27 and 28 February at two schools in Hooghly district, which were attended by about 600 students. **Kailashahar**: A devotees' convention on 19 March in which about 600 people participated. **Karimganj**: A devotees' convention on 18 February and a youths' convention on 24 February. In all, 517 people participated in the programmes. **Pala**: A students' convention on 12 March in which 102 students from different colleges took part. **Purulia**: A youths' conference at Purulia town on 23 March, which was presided over by Swami Suvirananda and attended by about 700 youths. The conference was held in association with the Higher Education Department, Government of West Bengal. **Rajkot**: A spiritual retreat on 11 March, a youths' convention on 20 March, and a lecture on 26 March. In all, about 2,000 people attended the programmes. **Ramharipur**: A volleyball tournament on 3 and 4 March in which 16 teams participated, and a teachers' convention on 4 March which was attended by 243 teachers from 65 schools. **Saradapi-tha**: An international seminar at Vidyamandira on

Sister Nivedita on 10 and 11 March which was attended by about 400 people. Swami Suvirananda delivered the keynote address at the seminar.

Swamiji's Ancestral House: Five lectures at the centre and elsewhere in Kolkata between 27 February and 16 March. In all, 2,680 people attended the lectures. **Tamluk**: Cultural competitions at 26 schools in Purba Medinipur and Paschim Medinipur districts in which about 6,500 students took part. The final round of the competitions and the prize-giving ceremony, attended by about 500 people, were held at the Ashrama on 22 March.

News of Branch Centres

Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Garbeta concluded its year-long centenary celebration through a youths' convention held on 16 February attended by 850 youths.

Sri Tathagata Roy, Governor of Tripura, visited **Ramakrishna Mission, Dhaleswar** sub-centre of **Agartala** centre on 18 February.

Swami Suvirananda inaugurated the generic medicine store at **Ramakrishna Mission Seva Pratishthan, Kolkata** on 23 February.

Eight students of class 11 of **Ramakrishna Mission Boys' Home, Rahara**, who had participated in the Junior Scholarship Test 2017 conducted by the Jagadish Bose National Science Talent Search in Kolkata, were awarded junior scholarships, and another student received a junior encouragement award. The school also won the second prize in the competition.

Sri Narayan Chandra Chanda, Minister of Fisheries and Livestock, Government of Bangladesh, participated in the birthday celebration of Sri Ramakrishna at **Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, Dhaka** on 17 February.

Values Education and Youth Programmes

Vivekananda College of Chennai Vidyapith held cultural competitions from 13 to 19 February centred around Swamiji's message. Srimat Swami Gautamanandaji Maharaj, Vice-President, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission and Adhyaksha, Ramakrishna Math, Chennai, inaugurated the competitions in which about 5,000 students from different colleges took part. In the blood donation camp conducted on 13 and 14 February, 1,441 students donated blood.

Cooch Behar Math conducted a youths' convention on 18 February which was attended by 260 students and 20 teachers.

Kanpur centre held a lecture programme at a school in a village in Unnao district on 15 February which was attended by 425 students and teachers.

Mysuru Ashrama conducted 10 lecture programmes in different colleges in Mysuru and in the Ashrama between 19 and 24 February. In all, about 4,500 students attended these programmes.

Rajkot Ashrama held 9 values education programmes for school children from 7 to 20 February. In all, 679 students from 9 schools took part in the programmes.

Salem Ashrama conducted a values education programme at a college in Namakkal on 29 and 30 January which was attended by 200 students.

Vijayawada centre held five symposia based on the book *Personality Development*, a compilation of Swamiji's teachings, at five educational institutions in Narsapur and Vijayawada in January and February. In all, about 1,500 college students took part in the symposia.

Relief

Distress Relief: The Headquarters and the centres mentioned below distributed various items, shown against their names, to needy people: **India:** **Baghbazar:** 100 saris, 67 shirts, and 97 trousers on 31 December 2017. **Belgharia:**

3,676 shirts, 2,533 trousers, and 4,440 belts and wallets from 3 September to 20 December. **Bamunmura:** 480 saris from 27 to 31 December. **Baranagar Mission:** 403 shirts, 434 tops, and 920 trousers from 25 to 29 December. **Chapra:** 1,136 shirts, 1,286 tops, and 3,363 trousers from 22 August to 25 October. **Cooch Behar:** 158 saris, 20 dhotis, and 4 lungis on 8 January. **Headquarters:** 100 saris from 10 to 20 December. **Kamarpukur:** 1,995 shirts, 2,056 tops, and 4,284 trousers from 10 November to 14 December. **Kankurgachhi:** 34 saris, 141 children's garments, 113 notebooks, 113 pens, and 113 geometry boxes on 10 January. **Koyilandy:** 119 saris and 238 solar lanterns on 14 January. **Lucknow:** 3,319 shirts, 8,618 tops, and 3,613 trousers from 2 to 22 January. **Medinipur:** 1,161 shirts, 807 tunics, 1,774 trousers, 299 leggings, 200 saris, and 65 dhotis from 20 November to 22 December. **Narottam Nagar:** 290 shirts, 360 T-shirts, 640 trousers, 130 tops, and 251 other ladies garments from 30 December to 23 January. **Rahara:** 236 saris, 68 dhotis, 10 chaddars, 3 lungis, 12 kg baby food, and 650 bottles of hair oil from 29 December to 23 January. **Sargachhi:** 2,070 shirts, 1,074 tops, and 2,078 trousers from 10 September to 20 December. **Silchar:** 957 mosquito-nets, 426 children's garments, and 336 packets of *Horlicks* (500 gm each) from 11 November and 22 December. **Srinagar:** 300 electric hot water bottles from 31 October to 26 November. **Vijayawada:** 82 saris, 17 dhotis, 17 towels, 100 kg wheat flour, 250 kg dal, 100 kg dalia (broken wheat), 100 kg suji (semolina), 100 litres edible oil and 25 kg garlic on 30 December. **Bangladesh:** **Chittagong:** 150 saris on 8 January.

Economic Rehabilitation: The following centres distributed necessary items to poor and needy people: **Chandipur:** 6 sewing machines on 3 January. **Rahara:** 3 sewing machines and a tricycle on 29 December and 14 January. 

Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama

Swami Vivekananda Path, P.O. Bela, **Muzaffarpur-842002, Bihar, Phone:** 0621-2272127, 2272963
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Appeal

Introduction:

Established in the Year 1926, Eye Infirmary started with the financial aid of British Governor, Lord Rutherford in the year 1947. Affiliated to RamaKrishna Math and RamaKrishna Mission, Belur Math, Howrah, West Bengal in July 2003.

Our Vision:

Specialty in Eye, ENT, Dental, OPD for other departments, Diagnostics, Paramedical Training.

Service Rendered (2017 – 18) :

Medical: Total OPD -95,628 Patients (Eye-45943, Allopathy-11540, Dental-3876, Homeopathy-34275); Pathology-3,692; Total Surgery-4,972 (Cataract Free-2858, Cataract Part Free-1968, & Others-146), Mobile Ophthalmic Van to reach out to villages,

Disaster Management: Flood Relief-Cooked food to 625 families, Winter Relief: Blankets to -300 Beneficiaries, Distress Relief: Readymade Dress to 2147 Beneficiaries.

Non Formal Education: GAP-100 Students, VSPP-75 Students, Balak Sangh-70 Students, Computer Awareness Training-27 Students, Free Coaching-35 Students, Study Circle-55 Meetings, Tailoring & Embroidery-40 Women.

Required - keeping in mind the immense potentiality of services in North Bihar Districts we require the following:

Rs. 11 Crore for construction of Ancillary Medical unit for Camp Patient's Stay, Doctor's Quarters, Paramedical Training Institute, Library, Auditorium and Office.

Rs. 3 Crore for Equipments and Machinery.

Rs.15 Lakh for Maintainence of old buildings, walls, road.

Rs.10 Lakh for Educational Programmes, Puja and Celebration for the year 2018-19.



Vivekananda Netralaya



Recovery Unit



Mobile Ophthalmic Van



Dear Friends,

With your unanimous support throughout we have started reaching out to the poor patients of North Bihar Districts by giving quality free treatment. It is our humble request to you to come forward and donate to make our mission a successful one.

Kindly send your contribution by Cheque/DD or by NEFT/ RTGS to A/c No. **10877071752 IFS Code: SBIN0006016** in favour of **Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Muzaffarpur**. Any contribution made in favour of "Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Muzaffarpur." is exempted from Income Tax u/s 80G of IT Act 1961.

**Swami Bhavatmananda
Secretary**



TOWARDS A BRIGHTER TOMORROW



₹ Finance



Healthcare



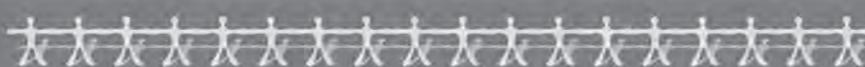
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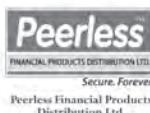
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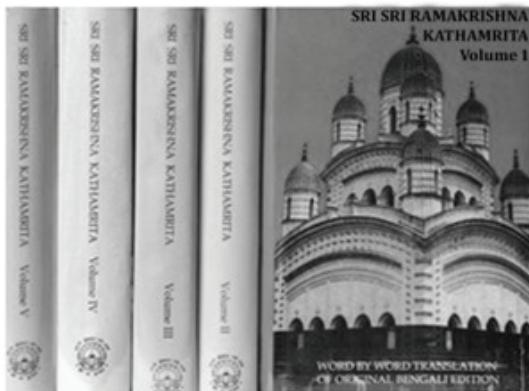
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We want to lead mankind to the place where there is neither the Vedas, nor the Bible, nor the Koran; yet this has to be done by harmonising the Vedas, the Bible and the Koran.

Mankind ought to be taught that religions are but the varied expressions of THE RELIGION which is Oneness, so that each may choose the path that suits him best.

Swami Vivekananda

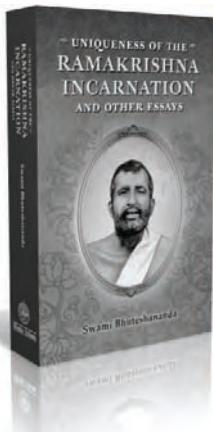
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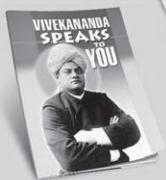
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Appeal for Rural Empowerment

Dear Devotees & Well-wishers,

Ramakrishna Math, Rajarhat Bishnupur, started in 1953 at the birthplace of Swami Niranjanananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna is one of the branch centres of Ramakrishna Math & Mission, headquartered in Belur, West Bengal. The present temple was inaugurated in 1986 by Most Revered Swami Bhuteshanandaji Maharaj.

Besides daily worship and special celebrations, we also serve the needy families, children, and day-labourers of this district under the rural development project. Though merely 15 km from Salt Lake, Kolkata, it is yet to see development. Presently our medical services (allopathic & homeopathy) cater to about 1000 patients per month. Our educational services includes free coaching to about 150 poor students (classes I to X) and vocational skills training in plumbing and electrical for boys and tailoring for women.

To cater to the increasing demand for medicare among the poor and to give thrust to education of the children in this area we wish to start the following service activities with munificent support from devotees, well-wishers and corporates:

Description	Amount - INR
❖ Construction of New Building for Medical Dispensary	1,50,00,000
❖ Computer training centre for poor students	5,00,000
❖ Mobile medical Unit	2,00,000
❖ Text Books, copy books for students	1,00,000
❖ Value Education Programme for youth	1,00,000
❖ Thakur Seva Fund (Endowment)	5,00,000
❖ Sadhu Seva Fund (Endowment)	5,00,000
❖ Monthly ration for widow mothers	3,00,000
❖ Community Hall and a Guest House for Devotees	10,00,000

We appeal to you to generously extend your financial / material support for the above. You may choose any one or two heads and mark your contribution. Donations however humble would be thankfully acknowledged.

Cheque/Draft may kindly be sent in favour of "Ramakrishna Math, Rajarhat Bishnupur" at the address given above. You may also directly transfer to our A/c No. 30496330847 in State Bank of India, IFS Code: SBIN0006208 Branch: Lauhati.

May the blessing of the Holy Trio and Swami Niranjananandaji be upon you all.
With loving namaskars and best wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Swami Harimayananda
Adhyaksha



Ramakrishna Math

Village : Bishnupur (Ghoshpara)

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In religion, as in all other matters,
discard everything that weakens
you, have nothing to do with it.
—Swami Vivekananda



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